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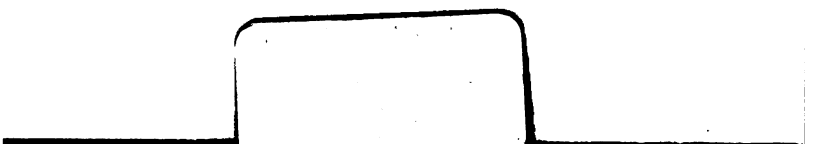
ONE WAY OUT

A MIDDLE-CLASS NEW-ENGLANDER EMIGRATES TO AMERICA

WILLIAM CARLETON

KD 8817



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BY

WILLIAM CARLETON

pseud. of Frederick Orin Bartlett

BOSTON
SMALL, MAYNARD & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
1911

KD 8817

Copyright, 1911
BY SMALL, MAYNARD & COMPANY
(INCORPORATED)

Entered at Stationers' Hall

Published January, 28, 1911; second printing January
Third printing February; fourth printing March
Fifth printing October, 1911; sixth printing
March, 1912; seventh printing
March, 1913, eighth printing
September, 1913

Presswork by The University Press,
Cambridge, U.S.A.

TO HER
WHO WASN'T AFRAID

19FEB'96

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ONE WAY OUT

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CHAPTER I

A BORN AND BRED NEW ENGLANDER

My great-grandfather was killed in the Revolution; my grandfather fought in the War of 1812; my father sacrificed his health in the Civil War; but I, though born in New England, am the first of my family to emigrate to this country—the United States of America. That sounds like a riddle or a paradox. It isn't; it's a plain statement of fact.

As a matter of convenience let me call myself Carleton. I've no desire to make public my life for the sake of notoriety. My only idea in writing these personal details is the hope that they may help some poor devil out of the same hole in which I found myself mired. They are of too sacred a nature to share except impersonally. Even behind the disguise of an assumed name I passed some mighty uncomfortable hours a few months ago when I

sketched out for a magazine and saw in cold print what I'm now going to give in full. It made me feel as though I had pulled down the walls of my house and was living my life open to the view of the street. For a man whose home means what it does to me, there's nothing pleasant about that.

However, I received some letters following that brief article which made the discomfort seem worth while. My wife and I read them over with something like awe. They came from Maine and they came from Texas; they came from the north, they came from the south, until we numbered our unseen friends by the hundred. Running through these letters was the racking cry that had once rended our own hearts—"How to get out!" As we read some of them our throats grew lumpy.

"God help them," said my wife over and over again.

As we read others, we felt very glad that our lives had been in some way an inspiration to them. After talking the whole matter over we decided that if it helped any to let people know how we ourselves pulled out, why it was our duty to do so. For that purpose, which is

the purpose of this book, Carleton is as good a name as any.

My people were all honest, plodding, middle-class Americans. They stuck where they were born, accepted their duties as they came, earned a respectable living and died without having money enough left to make a will worth while. They were all privates in the ranks. But they were the best type of private—honest, intelligent, and loyal unto death. They were faithful to their families and unswerving in their duty to their country. The records of their lives aren't interesting, but they are as open as daylight.

My father seems to have had at first a bit more ambition stirring within him than his ancestors. He started in the lumber business for himself in a small way but with the first call for troops sold out and enlisted. He did not distinguish himself but he fought in more battles than many a man who came out a captain. He didn't quit until the war was over. Then he crawled back home subdued and sick. He refused ever to draw a pension because he felt it was as much a man's duty to fight for his country as for his wife. He secured a position as head clerk and confidential

man with an old established lumber firm and here he stuck the rest of his life. He earned a decent living and in the course of time married and occupied a comfortable home. My mother died when I was ten and after that father sold his house and we boarded. It was a dreary enough life for both of us. Mother was the sort of mother who lives her whole life in caring for her men folks so that her going left us as helpless as babies. For a long while we didn't even know when to change our stockings. But obeying the family tradition, father accepted his lot stoically and as final. No one in our family ever married twice. With the death of the wife and mother the home ceased and that was the end of it.

I remember my father with some pride. He was a tall, old-fashioned looking man with a great deal of quiet dignity. I came to know him much better in the next few years after mother died than ever before for we lived together in one room and had few friends. I can see him now sitting by a small kerosene lamp after I had gone to bed clumsily trying to mend some rent in my clothes. I thought it an odd occupation for a man but I know now what he was about. I think his love for my

mother must have been deep for he talked to me a great deal of her and seemed much more concerned about my future on her account than on either his own or mine. I think it was she—she was a woman of some spirit—who persuaded him to consider sending me to college. This accounted partly for the mending although there was some sentiment about it too. I think he liked to feel that he was carrying out her work for me even in such a small matter as this.

How much he was earning and how much he saved I never knew. I went to school and had all the common things of the ordinary boy and I don't remember that I ever asked him for any pocket money but what he gave it to me. It was towards the end of my senior year in the high school that I began to notice a change in him. He was at times strangely excited and at other times strangely blue. He asked me a great many questions about my preference in the matter of a college and bade me keep well up in my studies. He began to skimp a little and I found out afterwards that one reason he grew so thin was because he did away with his noon meal. It makes my blood boil now when I remember where the fruit of

this self-sacrifice went. I wouldn't recall it here except as a humble tribute to his memory.

One night I came back to the room and though it was not yet dark I was surprised to see a crack of yellow light creeping out from beneath the sill. Suspecting something was wrong, I pushed open the door and saw my father seated by the lamp with a pair of trousers I had worn when a kid in his hands. His head was bent and he was trying to sew. I went to his side and asked him what the trouble was. He looked up but he didn't know me. He never knew me again. He died a few days afterwards. I found then that he had invested all his savings in a wild-cat mining scheme. They had been swept away.

So at eighteen I was left alone with the only capital that succeeding generations of my family ever inherited—a common school education and a big, sound physique. My father's tragic death was a heavy blow but the mere fact that I was thrown on my own resources did not dishearten me. In fact the prospect rather roused me. I had soaked in the humdrum atmosphere of the boarding house so long that the idea of having to earn my own living came rather as an adventure. While dependent on

my father, I had been chained to this one room and this one city, but now I felt as though the whole wide world had suddenly been opened up to me. I had no particular ambition beyond earning a comfortable living and I was sure enough at eighteen of being able to do this. If I chose, I could go to sea—there wasn't a vessel but what would take so husky a youngster; if I wished, I could go into railroading—here again there was a demand for youth and brawn. I could go into a factory and learn manufacturing or I could go into an office and learn a business. I was young, I was strong, I was unfettered. There is no one on earth so free as such a young man. I could settle in New York or work my way west and settle in Seattle or go north into Canada. My legs were stout and I could walk if necessary. And wherever I was, I had only to stop and offer the use of my back and arms in return for food and clothes. Most men feel like this only once in their lives. In a few years they become fettered again—this time for good.

Having no inclination towards the one thing or the other, I took the first opportunity that offered. A chum of mine had entered the employ of the United Woollen Company and see-

ing another vacancy there in the clerical department, he persuaded me to join him. I began at five dollars a week. I was put at work adding up columns of figures that had no more meaning to me than the problems in the school arithmetic. But it wasn't hard work and my hours were short and my associates pleasant. After a while I took a certain pride in being part of this vast enterprise. My chum and I hired a room together and we both felt like pretty important business men as we bought our paper on the car every morning and went down town.

It took close figuring to do anything but live that first year and yet we pushed our way with the crowd into the nigger heavens and saw most of the good shows. I had never been to the theatre before and I liked it.

Next year I received a raise of five dollars and watched the shows from the rear of the first balcony. That is the only change the raise made that I can remember except that I renewed my stock of clothes. The only thing I'm sure of is that at the end of the second year I didn't have anything left over.

That is true of the next six years. My salary was advanced steadily to twenty dollars

and at that time it took just twenty dollars a week for me to live. I wasn't extravagant and I wasn't dissipated but every raise found a new demand. It seemed to work automatically. You might almost say that our salaries were not raised at all but that we were promoted from a ten dollar plane of life to a fifteen dollar plane and then to a twenty. And we all went together—that is the men who started together. Each advance meant unconsciously the wearing of better clothes, rooming at better houses, eating at better restaurants, smoking better tobacco, and more frequent amusements. This left us better satisfied of course but after all it left us just where we began. Life didn't mean much to any of us at this time and if we were inclined to look ahead why there were the big salaried jobs before us to dream about. But even if a man had been forehanded and of a saving nature, he couldn't have done much without sacrificing the only friends most of us had—his office associates. For instance—to save five dollars a week at this time I would have had to drop back into the fifteen dollars a week crowd and I'd have been as much out of place there as a boy dropped into a lower grade at school. I

remember that when I was finally advanced another five dollars I half-heartedly resolved to put that amount in the bank weekly. But at this point the crowd all joined a small country club and I had either to follow or drop out of their lives. Of course in looking back I can see where I might have done differently but I wasn't looking back then—nor very far ahead either. If it would have prevented my joining the country club I'm glad I didn't.

It was out there that I met the girl who became my wife. My best reason for remaining anonymous is the opportunity it will give me to tell about Ruth. I want to feel free to rave about her if I wish. She objected in the magazine article and she objects even more strongly now but, as before, I must have an uncramped hand in this. The chances are that I shall talk more about her than I did the first time. The whole scheme of my life, beginning, middle and end, swings around her. Without her inspiration I don't like to think what the end of me might have been. And it's just as true to-day as it was in the stress of the fight.

I was twenty-six when I met Ruth and she was eighteen. She came out to the club one

Saturday afternoon to watch some tennis. It happened that I had worked into the finals of the tournament but that day I wasn't playing very well. I was beaten in the first set, six-two. What was worse I didn't care a hang if I was. I had found myself feeling like this about a lot of things during those last few months. Then as I made ready to serve the second set I happened to see in the front row of the crowd to the right of the court a slight girl with blue eyes. She was leaning forward looking at me with her mouth tense and her fists tight closed. Somehow I had an idea that she wanted me to win. I don't know why, because I was sure I'd never seen her before; but I thought that perhaps she had bet a pair of gloves or a box of candy on me. If she had, I made up my mind that she'd get them. I started in and they said, afterwards, I never played better tennis in my life. At any rate I beat my man.

After the game I found someone to introduce me to her and from that moment on there was nothing else of so great consequence in my life. I learned all about her in the course of the next few weeks. Her family, too, was distinctly middle-class, in the sense that none

of them had ever done anything to distinguish themselves either for good or bad. Her parents lived on a small New Hampshire farm and she had just been graduated from the village academy and had come to town to visit her aunt. The latter was a tall, lean woman, who, after the death of her husband had been forced to keep lodgers to eke out a living. Ruth showed me pictures of her mother and father, and they might have been relatives of mine as far as looks went. The father had caught an expression from the granite hills which most New England farmers get—a rugged, strained look; the mother was lean and kind and worried. I met them later and liked them.

Ruth was such a woman as my mother would have taken to; clear and laughing on the surface, but with great depths hidden among the golden shallows. Her experience had all been among the meadows and mountains so that she was simple and direct and fearless in her thoughts and acts. You never had to wonder what she meant when she spoke and when you came to know her you didn't even have to wonder what she was dreaming about. And yet she was never the same because she was always growing. But the thing that woke me

up most of all from the first day I met her was the interest she took in everyone and everything. A fellow couldn't bore Ruth if he tried. She would have the time of her life sitting on a bench in the park or walking down the street or just staring out the window of her aunt's front room. And that street looked like Sunday afternoon all the week long.

I began to do some figuring when I was alone but there wasn't much satisfaction in it. I had the clothes in my room, a good collection of pipes, and ten dollars of my last week's salary. A man couldn't get married on that even to a girl like Ruth who wouldn't want much. I cut down here and there but I naturally wanted to appear well before Ruth and so the savings went into new ties and shoes. In this way I fretted along for a few months until I screwed my courage up to ask for another raise. Those were prosperous days for the United Woollen and everyone from the president to the office boy was in good humor. I went to Morse, head of the department, and told him frankly that I wished to get married and needed more money. That wasn't a business reason for an increase but those of us who had worked there some years had come to feel

like one of the family and it wasn't unusual for the company to raise a man at such a time. He said he'd see what he could do about it and when I opened my pay envelope the next week I found an extra five in it.

I went direct from the office to Ruth and asked her to marry me. She didn't hang her head nor stammer but she looked me straight in the eyes a moment longer than usual and answered:

"All right, Billy."

"Then let's go out this afternoon and see about getting a house," I said.

I don't think a Carleton ever boarded when first married. To me it wouldn't have seemed like getting married. I knew a suburb where some of the men I had met at the country club lived and we went out there. It was a beautiful June day and everything looked clean and fresh. We found a little house of eight rooms that we knew we wanted as soon as we saw it. It was one of a group of ten or fifteen that were all very much alike. There was a piazza on the front and a little bit of lawn that looked as though it had been squeezed in afterwards. In the rear there was another strip of land where we thought we might raise some garden

stuff if we put it in boxes. The house itself had a front hall out of which stairs led to the next floor. To the right there was a large room separated by folding doors with another good-sized room next to it which would naturally be used as a dining room. In the rear of this was the kitchen and besides the door there was a slide through which to pass the food. Upstairs there were four big rooms stretching the whole width of the house. Above these there was a servant's room. The whole house was prettily finished and in the two rooms down stairs there were fireplaces which took my eye, although they weren't bigger than coal hods. It was heated by a furnace and lighted by electricity and there were stained glass panels either side of the front door.

The rent was forty dollars a month and I signed a three years' lease before I left. The next week was a busy one for us both. We bought almost a thousand dollars' worth of furniture on the installment plan and even then we didn't seem to get more than the bare necessities. I hadn't any idea that house furnishings cost so much. But if the bill had come to five times that I wouldn't have cared.

The installments didn't amount to very much a week and I already saw Morse promoted and myself filling his position at twenty-five hundred. I hadn't yet got over the feeling I had at eighteen that life was a big adventure and that a man with strong legs and a good back *couldn't* lose. With Ruth at my side I bought like a king. Though I never liked the idea of running into debt this didn't seem like a debt. I had only to look into her dear blue eyes to feel myself safe in buying the store itself. Ruth herself sometimes hesitated but, as I told her, we might as well start right and once for all as to go at it half heartedly.

The following Saturday we were married. My vacation wasn't due for another month so we decided not to wait. The old folks came down from the farm and we just called in a clergyman and were married in the front parlor of the aunt's house. It was both very simple and very solemn. For us both the ceremony meant the taking of a sacred oath of so serious a nature as to forbid much lightheartedness. And yet I did wish that the father and mother and aunt had not dressed in black and cried during it all. Ruth wore a white dress and looked very beautiful and didn't seem afraid.

As for me, my knees trembled and I was chalk white. I think it was the old people and the room, for when it was over and we came out into the sunshine again I felt all right except a bit light-headed. I remember that the street and the houses and the cars seemed like very small matters.

CHAPTER II

THIRTY DOLLARS A WEEK

When, with Ruth on my arm, I walked up the steps of the house and unlocked the front door, I entered upon a new life. It was my first taste of home since my mother died and added to that was this new love which was finer than anything I had ever dreamed about. It seemed hard to have to leave every morning at half past six and not get back until after five at night, but to offset this we used to get up as early as four o'clock during the long summer days. Many the time even in June Ruth and I ate our breakfast by lamp-light. It gave us an extra hour and she was bred in the country where getting up in the morning is no great hardship.

We couldn't afford a servant and we didn't want one. Ruth was a fine cook and I certainly did justice to her dishes after ten years of restaurants and boarding-houses. On rainy days when we couldn't get out, she used to do

her cooking early so that I might watch her. It seemed a lot more like her cooking when I saw her pat out the dough and put it in the oven instead of coming home and finding it all done. I used to fill up my pipe and sit by the kitchen stove until I had just time to catch the train by sprinting.

But when the morning was fine we'd either take a long walk through the big park reservation which was near the house or we'd fuss over the garden. We had twenty-two inches of radishes, thirty-eight inches of lettuce, four tomato plants, two hills of corn, three hills of beans and about four yards of early peas. In addition to this Ruth had squeezed a geranium into one corner and a fern into another and planted sweet alyssum around the whole business. Everyone out here planned to raise his own vegetables. It was supposed to cut down expenses but I noticed the market man always did a good business.

I had met two or three of the men at the country club and they introduced me to the others. We were all earning about the same salaries and living in about the same type of house. Still there were differences and you could tell more by the wives than the husbands

those whose salaries went over two thousand. Two or three of the men were in banks, one was in a leather firm, one was an agent for an insurance company, another was with the telegraph company, another was with the Standard Oil, and two or three others were with firms like mine. Most of them had been settled out here three or four years and had children. In a general way they looked comfortable and happy enough but you heard a good deal of talk among them about the high cost of living and you couldn't help noticing that those who dressed the best had the fewest children. One or two of them owned horses but even they felt obliged to explain that they saved the cost of them in car fares.

They all called and left their cards but that first year we didn't see much of them. There wasn't room in my life for anyone but Ruth at that time. I didn't see even the old office gang except during business hours and at lunch.

The rent scaled my salary down to one thousand and eighty dollars at one swoop. Then we had to save out at least five dollars a week to pay on the furniture. This left eight hundred and twenty, or fifteen dollars and seventy-

five cents a week, to cover running expenses. We paid cash for everything and though we never had much left over at the end of the week and never anything at the end of the month, we had about everything we wanted. For one thing our tastes were not extravagant and we did no entertaining. Our grocery and meat bill amounted to from five to seven dollars a week. Of course I had my lunches in town but I got out of those for twenty cents. My daily car fare was twenty cents more which brought my total weekly expenses up to about three dollars. This left a comfortable margin of from five to seven dollars for light, coal, clothes and amusements. In the summer the first three items didn't amount to much so some weeks we put most of this into the furniture. But the city was new to Ruth, especially at night, so we were in town a good deal. She used to meet me at the office and we'd walk about the city and then take dinner at some little French restaurant and then maybe go to a concert or the theatre. She made everything new to me again. At the theatre she used to perch on the edge of her seat so breathless, so responsive that I often saw the old timers watch her

instead of the show. I often did myself. And sometimes it seemed as though the whole company acted to her alone.

Those days were perfect. The only incident to mar them was the death of Ruth's parents. They died suddenly and left an estate of six or seven hundred dollars. Ruth insisted upon putting that into the furniture. But in our own lives every day was as fair as the first. My salary came as regularly as an annuity and there was every prospect for advancement. The garden did well and Ruth became acquainted with most of the women in a sociable way. She joined a sewing circle which met twice a month chiefly I guess for the purpose of finding out about one another's husbands. At any rate she told me more about them than I would have learned in ten years.

Still, during the fall and winter we kept pretty much by ourselves, not deliberately but because neither of us cared particularly about whist parties and such things but preferred to spend together what time we had. And then I guess Ruth was a little shy about her clothes. She dressed mighty well to my eye but she made most of her things herself and didn't care much about style. She didn't no-

tice the difference at home but when she was out among others, they made her feel it. However spring came around again and we forgot all about those details. We didn't go in town so much that summer and used to spend more time on our piazza. I saw more of the men in this way and found them a pleasant, companionable lot. They asked me to join the Neighborhood Club and I did, more to meet them half way than because I wanted to. There we played billiards and discussed the stock market and furnaces. All of them had schemes for making fortunes if only they had a few thousand dollars capital. Now and then you'd find a group of them in one corner discussing a rumor that so and so had lost his job. They spoke of this as they would of a death. But none of those subjects interested me especially in view of what I was looking forward to in my own family.

In the afternoons of the early fall the women sent over jellies and such stuff to Ruth and dropped in upon her with whispered advice. She used to repeat it to me at night with a gay little laugh and her eyes sparkling like diamonds. She was happier now than I had ever seen her and so was I myself. When I

went in town in the morning I felt very important.

I thought I had touched the climax of life when I married Ruth but when the boy came he lifted me a notch higher. And with him he brought me a new wife in Ruth, without taking one whit from the old. Sweetheart, wife and mother now, she revealed to me new depths of womanhood.

She taught me, too, what real courage is. I was the coward when the time came. I had taken a day off but the doctor ordered me out of the house. I went down to the club and I felt more one of the neighborhood that day than I ever did before or afterwards. It was Saturday and during the afternoon a number of the men came in and just silently gripped my hand.

The women, too, seemed to take a new interest in us. When Ruth was able to sit up they brought in numberless little things. But you'd have thought it was their house and not mine, the way they treated me. When any of them came I felt as though I didn't belong there and ought to tip-toe out.

We'd been saving up during the summer for this emergency so that we had enough to pay

for the doctor and the nurse but that was only the beginning of the new expenses. In the first place we had to have a servant now. I secured a girl who knew how to cook after a fashion, for four dollars a week. But that wasn't by any means what she cost us. In spite of Ruth's supervision the girl wasted as much as she used so that our provision bill was nearly doubled. If we hadn't succeeded in paying for the furniture before this I don't know what we would have done. As it was I found my salary pretty well strained. I hadn't any idea that so small a thing as a baby could cost so much. Ruth had made most of his things but I know that some of his shirts cost as much as mine.

When the boy was older Ruth insisted upon getting along without a girl again. I didn't approve of this but I saw that it would make her happier to try anyway. How in the world she managed to do it I don't know but she did. This gave her an excuse for not going out—though it was an excuse that made me half ashamed of myself—and so we saved in another way. Even with this we just made both ends meet and that was all.

The boy grew like a weed and before I knew

it he was five years old. Until he began to walk and talk I didn't think of him as a possible man. He didn't seem like anything in particular. He was just soft and round and warm. But when he began to wear knickerbockers he set me to thinking hard. He wasn't going to remain always a baby; he was going to grow into a boy and then a young man and before I knew it he would be facing the very same problem that now confronted me. And that problem was how to get enough ahead of the game to give him a fair start in life. I realized, too, that I wanted him to do something better than I had done. When I stopped to think of it I had accomplished mighty little. I had lived and that was about all. That I had lived happily was due to Ruth. But if I was finding difficulty in keeping even with the game now, what was I going to do when the youngster would prove a decidedly more serious item of expense?

I talked this over with Ruth and we both decided that somehow, in some way, we must save some money every year. We started in by reducing our household expenses still further. But it seemed as though fate were against us for prices rose just enough to ab-

sorb all our little economies. Flour went up and sugar went up, and though we had done away with meat almost wholly now, vegetables went up. So, too, did coal. Not only that but we had long since found it impossible to keep to ourselves as we had that first year. Little by little we had been drawn into the social life of the neighborhood. Not a month went by but what there was a dinner or two or a whist party or a dance. Personally I didn't care about such things but as Ruth had become a matron and in consequence had been thrown more in contact with the women, she had lost her shyness and grown more sociable. She often suggested declining an invitation but we couldn't decline one without declining all. I saw clearly enough that I had no right to do this. She did more work than I and did not have the daily change. To have made a social exile of her would have been to make her little better than a slave. But it cost money. It cost a lot of money. We had to do our part in return and though Ruth accomplished this by careful buying and all sorts of clever devices, the item became a big one in the year's expenses.

I began to look forward with some anxiety

for the next raise. At the office I hunted for extra work with an eye upon the place above; but though I found the work nothing came of it but extra hours. In fact I began to think myself lucky to hold the job I had for a gradual change of methods had been slowly going on in the office. Mechanical adding machines had cost a dozen men their jobs; a card system of bookkeeping had made it possible to discharge another dozen, while an off year in woollens sent two or three more flying, among them the man who had found me the position in the first place. But he hadn't married and he went out west somewhere. Occasionally when work picked up again a young man was taken on to fill the place of one of the discharged men. The company always saved a few hundred dollars by such a shift for the lad never got the salary of the old employee, and so far as anyone could see the work went on just as well.

While these moves were ominous, as I can see now in looking back, they didn't disturb me very much at the time. I filled a little niche in the office that was all my own. At every opportunity I had familiarized myself with the work of the man above me and was

on very good terms with him. I waited patiently and confidently for the day when Morse should call me in and announce his own advance and leave me to fill his place. I might have to begin on two thousand but it was a sure twenty-five hundred eventually to say nothing of what it led to. The president of the company had begun as I had and had moved up the same steps that now lay ahead of me.

In the meanwhile the life at home ran smoothly in spite of everything. Neither the wife, the boy nor I was sick a day for we all had sound bodies to start with. Our country-bred ancestors didn't need a will to leave us those. If at times we felt a trifle pinched especially in the matter of clothes, it was wonderful how rich Ruth contrived to make us feel. She knew how to take care of things and though I didn't spend half what some of the men spent on their suits, I went in town every morning looking better than two-thirds of them. I was inspected from head to foot before I started and there wasn't a wrinkle or a spot so small that it could last twenty-four hours. I shined my own shoes and pressed my own trousers and Ruth looked to it that this was done well. Moreover she could turn a tie, clean and press

it so that it looked brand new. I think some of the neighbors even thought I was extravagant in my dressing.

She did the same for herself and had caught the knack of seeming to dress stylishly without really doing so. She had beautiful hair and this in itself made her look well dressed. As for the boy he was a model for them all.

In the meanwhile the boy had grown into short trousers and before we knew it he was in school. It made it lonesome for her during the day when he began to trudge off every morning at nine o'clock. She began to look forward to Saturdays as eagerly as the boy did. Then the next thing we knew he'd start off even earlier on that day to join his playmates. Sunday was the only day either of us had him to ourselves.

After he began to go to school, Ruth and I seemed to begin another life. In a way we felt all by ourselves once more. I didn't get home until half past seven now and Dick was then abed. He was abed too when I left in the morning. Of course he was never off my mind and if he hadn't been asleep upstairs I guess I'd have known a difference. But at the same time he was, in a small way, living

his own life now which left Ruth and me to ourselves once more. She used to go over for me all the details of his day from the time she took him up in the morning until she tucked him away in bed again at night and then there would come a pause. It seemed as though there ought to be something more, but there wasn't. The next few months it seemed almost as though she was waiting. For what, I didn't know and yet I too felt there was a lapse in our lives. I never loved her more. There was never a time when she was so truly my wife and yet in our combined lives there was something lacking. After a while I began to notice a wistful expression in her eyes. It always came after she had said,

"So Dicky said, 'God bless father and mother,' and then he went to sleep."

Then one night it dawned on me. Hers was the same heart hunger that had been eating at me. Dick was a boy now and there was no baby to take his place. But, good Lord, as it was I hadn't been able to save a dollar. I knew that we were simply holding on tight and drifting. The boat was loaded to the gunwales even now. And yet that expression in

her eyes had a right to be answered. But I couldn't answer it. I didn't dare open my mouth. I didn't dare speak even one night when she said,

"He's all we have, Billy—just one."

I gripped her hand and sat staring into the little coal hod fireplace which we didn't light more than once a month now. Even as I watched the flames I saw them licking up pennies.

Just one! And I too wanted a houseful like Dick.

I had to see that look night after night and I had to go to town knowing I was leaving her all alone with the one away at school. And what a mother she was! She ought to have had a baby by her side all the time.

As the one grew, his expenses increased. The only way to meet them was by cutting down our own expenses still more. I cut out smoking and made my old clothes do an extra year. Ruth spent half her time in bargain hunting and saved still more by taking it out of herself. Poor little woman, she worked harder for a quarter than I did and I was working harder for that sum than I used to work for a dollar.

But we were not alone in the struggle. As we came to know more about the people in that group of snug little houses we knew that the same grim fight was going on in all of them. Some of them were not so lucky as we and ran into debt while a few of them were luckier and were helped out with legacies or by well-to-do relatives. We were as much alike as peas in a pod. We were living on the future and bluffing out the present. You'd have thought it would have cast a gloom over the neighborhood—you'd have thought it would have done away with some of the parties and dances. But it didn't. In the first place this was, to most of us, just life. In the second place there didn't seem to be any alternative. There was no other way of living. The conditions seemed to be fixed; we had to eat, we had to wear a certain type of dress; and unless we wished to exist as exiles we had to meet on a certain plane of social intercourse. The conventions were as iron clad here as among the nobility of England. No one thought of violating them; no one thought it was possible. You had to live as the others did or die and be done with it. If anyone of us had thought we might have seen the foolishness of this

but it was all so manifest that no one did think. The only method of escape was a raise and that meant moving into another sphere which would cover that.

A new complication came when the boy grew old enough to have social functions of his own. He had made many new friends and he wanted to join a tennis club, a dancing class and contribute towards the support of the athletic teams of the school. Moreover he was invited to parties and had to give parties himself. Once again I tried to see some way out of this social business. It seemed such a pitiful waste of ammunition under the circumstances. I wanted to save the money if it was possible in any way to eke it out, for his education. But what could I do? The boy had to live as his friends lived or give them up. He wasn't asked to do any more than the other boys of the neighborhood but he was rightly asked to do as much. If he couldn't it would be at the sacrifice of his pride that he associated with them at all. And a just pride in a boy is something you can't safely tamper with. He had to have the money and we managed it somehow. But it brought home the old grim fact that I hadn't as yet saved a dollar.

I clung more than ever now to the one ray of hope—the job ahead. It was the only comfort Ruth and I had and whenever I felt especially downhearted she'd start in and plan how we'd spend it. It took the edge off the immediate thought of danger. In the meanwhile I resigned even from the Neighborhood Club and let the boy join the tennis club. I noticed at once a change in the attitude of the men towards me. But I was reaching a point now where I didn't care.

In this way, then, we lived until I was thirty-eight and Ruth was thirty, and the boy was eleven. For the last few months I had been doing night work without extra pay and so was practically exiled from the boy except on Sundays. He was not developing the way I wanted. The local grammar school was almost a private school for the neighborhood. I should have preferred to have it more cosmopolitan. The boy was rubbing up against only his own kind and this was making him soft, both physically and mentally. He was also getting querulous and autocratic. Ruth saw it, but with only one. . . . Well, on Sundays I took the boy with me on long cross-country jaunts and did a good deal of talking

to him. But all I said rolled off like water off a duck. He lacked energy and initiative. He was becoming distinctly more middle-class than either of us, with some of the faults of the so-called upper class thrown in. He chattered about Harvard, not as an opportunity, but as a class privilege. I didn't like it. But before I had time to worry much about this the crash came that I had not been wise enough to foresee.

CHAPTER III

THE MIDDLE CLASS HELL

One Saturday afternoon, after we had been paid off, Morse, the head of the department, whose job I had been eyeing enviously for five years now, called me into his office. For three minutes I saw all my hopes realized; for three minutes I walked dizzily with my whole life justified. I could hardly catch my breath as I followed him. I didn't realize until then how big a load I had been carrying. As a drowning man is said to see visions of his whole past life, I saw visions of my whole future. I saw Ruth's eager face lifted to mine as I told her the good news; I saw the boy taken from his commonplace surroundings and doing himself proud in some big preparatory school where he brushed up against a variety of other boys; I saw—God pity me for the fool I was—other children at home to take his place. I can say that for three minutes I have lived.

Morse seated himself in the chair before his

desk and, bending over his papers, talked without looking at me. He was a small fellow. I don't suppose a beefy man ever quite gets over a certain feeling of superiority before a small man. I could have picked up Morse in one hand.

"Carleton," he began, "I've got to cut down your salary five hundred dollars."

It came like a blow in the face. I don't think I answered.

"Sorry," he added, "but Evans says he can double up on your work and offers to do it for two hundred dollars more."

I repeated that name Evans over and over. He was the man under me. Then I saw my mistake. While watching the man ahead of me I had neglected to watch the man behind me. Evans and I had been good friends. I liked him. He was about twenty, and a hard worker.

"Well?" said Morse.

I recovered my wind.

"Good God," I cried; "I can't live on any less than I'm getting now!"

"Then you resign?" he asked quickly.

For a second I saw red. I wanted to take this pigmy by the throat. I wanted to shake

him. He didn't give me time before exclaiming:

"Very well, Carleton. I'll give you an order for two weeks' pay in advance."

The next thing I knew I was in the outer office with the order in my hand. I saw Evans at his desk. I guess I must have looked queer, for at first he shrank away from me. Then he came to my side.

"Carleton," he said, "what's the matter?"

"I guess you know," I answered.

"You aren't fired?"

I bucked up at this. I tried to speak naturally.

" Yes," I said, "I'm fired."

"But that isn't right, Carleton," he protested. "I didn't think it would come to that. I went to Morse and told him I wanted to get married and needed more money. He asked me if I thought I could do your work. I said yes. I'd have said yes if he'd asked me if I could do the president's work. But—come back and let me explain it to Morse."

It was white of him, wasn't it? But I saw clearly enough that he was only fighting for his right to love as I was fighting for mine. I don't know that I should have been as gen-

erous as he was—ten years before. He had started toward the door when I called him back.

"Don't go in there," I warned. "The first thing you know you'll be doing my work without your two hundred."

"That's so," he answered. "But what are you going to do now?"

"Get another job," I answered.

One of the great blessings of my life is the fact that it has always been easy to report bad news to Ruth. I never had to break things gently to her. She always took a blow standing up, like a man. So now I boarded my train and went straight to the house and told her. She listened quietly and then took my hand, patting it for a moment without saying anything. Finally she smiled at me.

"Well, Billy," she said, "it can't be helped, can it? So good luck to Evans and his bride."

When a woman is as brave as that it stirs up all the fighting blood in a man. Looking into her steady blue eyes I felt that I had exaggerated my misfortune. Thirty-eight is not old and I was able-bodied. I might land something even better than that which I had lost.

So instead of a night of misery I actually felt almost glad.

I started in town on Monday in high hope. But when I got off the train I began to wonder just where I was bound. What sort of a job was I going to apply for? What was my profession, anyway? I sat down in the station to think the problem over.

For twenty years now I had been a cog in the clerical machinery of the United Woollen Company. I was known as a United Woollen man. But just what else had this experience made of me? I was not a bookkeeper. I knew no more about keeping a full set of books than my boy. I had handled only strings of United Woollen figures; those meant nothing outside that particular office. I was not a stenographer, or an accountant, or a secretary. I had been called a clerk in the directory. But what did that mean? What the devil was I, after twenty years of hard work?

The question started the sweat to my forehead. But I pulled myself together again. At least I was an able-bodied man. I was willing to work, had a record of honesty and faithfulness, and was intelligent as men go. I didn't care what I did, so long as it gave me

a living wage. Surely, then, there must be some place for me in this alert, hustling city.

I bought a paper and turned to "Help Wanted." I felt encouraged at sight of the long column. I read it through carefully. Half of the positions demanded technical training; a fourth of them demanded special experience; the rest asked for young men. I couldn't answer the requirements of one of them. Again and again the question was forced in upon me—what the devil was I?

I didn't know which way to turn. I had no relatives to help me—from the days of my great-grandfather no Carleton had ever quit the game more than even. My business associates were as badly off as I was and so were my neighbors.

My relations with the latter were peculiar, now that I came to think of it. In these last dozen years I had come to know the details of their lives as intimately as my own. In a way we had been like one big family. We knew each other as Frank, and Joe, and Bill, and Josh, and were familiar with one another's physical ailments when any of us had any. If any of the children had whooping cough or the measles every man and woman in

the neighborhood watched at the bedside, in a sense, until the youngster was well again. We knew to a dollar what each man was earning and what each was spending. We borrowed one another's garden tools and the women borrowed from each other's kitchens. On the surface we were just about as intimate as it's possible for a community to be. And yet what did it amount to?

There wasn't a man-son of them to whom I would have dared go and confess the fact I'd lost my job. They'd know it soon enough, be sure of that; but it mustn't come from me. There wasn't one of them to whom I felt free to go and ask their help to interest their own firms to secure another position for me. Their respect for me depended upon my ability to maintain my social position. They were like steamer friends. On the voyage they clung to one another closer than bark to a tree, but once the gang plank was lowered the intimacy vanished. If I wished to keep them as friends I must stick to the boat.

I knew they couldn't do anything if they had wanted to, but at the same time I felt there was something wrong in a situation that would not allow me to ask even for a letter

of introduction without feeling like a beggar. I felt there was something wrong when they made me feel not like a brother in hard luck but like a criminal. I began to wonder what of sterling worth I had got out of this life during the past decade.

However that was an incidental matter. The only time I did such thinking as this was towards the early morning after I had lain awake all night and exhausted all other resources. I tackled the problem in the only way I could think of and that was to visit the houses with whom I had learned the United Woollen did business. I remembered the names of about a dozen of them and made the rounds of these for a starter. It seemed like a poor chance and I myself did not know exactly what they could do with me but it would keep me busy for a while.

With waits and delays this took me two weeks. Without letters it was almost impossible to reach the managers but I hung on in every case until I succeeded. Here again I didn't feel like an honest man offering to do a fair return of work for pay, so much as I did a beggar. This may have been my fault; but after you've sat around in offices and cor-

ridors and been scowled at as an intruder for three or four hours and then been greeted with a surly "What do you want?" you can't help having a grouch. There wasn't a man who treated my offer as a business proposition.

At the end of that time two questions were burned into my brain: "What can you do?" and "How old are you?" The latter question came as a revelation. It seems that from a business point of view I was considered an old man. My good strong body counted for nothing; my willingness to undertake any task counted for nothing. I was too old. No one wanted to bother with a beginner over eighteen or twenty. The market demanded youth—youth with the years ahead that I had already sold. Wherever I stumbled by chance upon a vacant position I found waiting there half a dozen stalwart youngsters. They looked as I had looked when I joined the United Woollen Company. I offered to do the same work at the same wages as the youngsters, but the managers didn't want me. They didn't want a man around with wrinkles in his face. Moreover, they were looking to the future. They didn't intend to adjust a man into their

machinery only to have him die in a dozen years. I wasn't a good risk. Moreover, I wouldn't be so easily trained, and with a wider experience might prove more bothersome. At thirty-eight I was too old to make a beginning. The verdict was unanimous. And yet I had a physique like an ox and there wasn't a gray hair in my head. I came out of the last of those offices with my fists clenched.

In the meanwhile I had used up my advance salary and was, for the first time in my life, running into debt. Having always paid my bills weekly I had no credit whatever. Even at the end of the third week I knew that the grocery man and butcher were beginning to fidget. The neighbors had by this time learned of my plight and were gossiping. And yet in the midst of all this I had some of the finest hours with my wife I had ever known.

She sent me away every morning with fresh hope and greeted me at night with a cheerfulness that was like wine. And she did this without any show of false optimism. She was not blind to the seriousness of our present position, but she exhibited a confidence in me that did not admit of doubt or fear. There was something almost awesomely beautiful about

standing by her side and facing the approaching storm. She used to place her small hands upon my back and exclaim:

"Why, Billy, there's work for shoulders like those."

It made me feel like a giant.

So another month passed. I subscribed to an employment bureau, but the only offer I received was to act as a sort of bouncer in a barroom. I suppose my height and weight and reputation for sobriety recommended me there. There was five dollars a week in it, and as far as I alone was concerned I would have taken it. That sum would at least buy bread, and though it may sound incredible the problem of getting enough to eat was fast becoming acute. The provision men became daily more suspicious. We cut down on everything, but I knew it was only a question of time when they would refuse to extend our credit for the little we *had* to have. And all around me my neighbors went their cheerful ways and waited for me to work it out. But whenever I thought of the barroom job and the money it would bring I could see them shake their heads.

It was hell. It was the deepest of all deep hells—the middle-class hell. There was noth-

ing theatrical about it—no fireworks or red lights. It was plain, dull, sodden. Here was my position: work in my own class I couldn't get; work as a young man I was too old to get; work as just plain physical labor these same middle-class neighbors refused to allow me to undertake. I couldn't black my neighbors' boots without social ostracism, though Pasquale, who kept the stand in the United Woollen building, once confided to me that he cleared some twenty-five dollars a week. I couldn't mow my neighbors' front lawns or deliver milk at their doors, though there was food in it. That was honest work—clean work; but if I attempted it would they play golf with me? Personally I didn't care. I would have taken a job that day. But there were the wife and boy. They were held in ransom. It's all very well to talk about scorning the conventions, to philosophize about the dignity of honest work, to quote "a man's a man for a' that"; but associates of their own kind mean more to a woman and a growing boy than they do to a man. At least I thought so at that time. When I saw my wife surrounded by well-bred, well-dressed women, they seemed to me an essential part of her life.

What else did living mean for her? When my boy brought home with him other boys of his age and kind—though to me they did not represent the highest type—I felt under obligations to retain those friends for him. I had begot him into this set. It seemed barbarous to do anything that would allow them to point the finger at him.

I felt a yearning for some primeval employment. I hungered to join the army or go to sea. But here again were the wife and boy. I felt like going into the Northwest and preempting a homestead. That was a saner idea, but it took capital and I didn't have enough. I was tied hand and foot. It was like one of those nightmares where in the face of danger you are suddenly struck dumb and immovable.

I was beginning to look wild-eyed. Ruth and I were living on bread, without butter, and canned soup. I sneaked in town with a few books and sold them for enough to keep the boy supplied with meat. My shoes were worn out at the bottom and my clothes were getting decidedly seedy. The men with whom I was in the habit of riding to town in the morning gave me as wide a berth as though I had the leprosy. I guess they were afraid

my hard luck was catching. God pity them, many of them were dangerously near the rim of this same hell themselves.

One morning my wife came to me reluctantly, but with her usual courage, and said:

"Billy, the grocery man didn't bring our order last night." It was like a sword-thrust. It made me desperate. But the worst of the middle-class hell is that there is nothing to fight back at. There you are. I couldn't say anything. There was no answer. My eyes must have looked queer, for Ruth came nearer and whispered:

"Don't go in town to-day, Billy."

I had on my hat and had gathered up two or three more volumes in my green bag. I looked at the trim little house that had been my home for so long. The rent would be due next month. I looked at the other trim little houses around me. Was it actually possible that a man could starve in such a community? It seemed like a satanic joke. Why, every year this country was absorbing immigrants by the thousand. They did not go hungry. They waxed fat and prosperous. There was Pasquale, the bootblack, who was earning nearly as much as I ever did.

We were standing on the porch. I took Ruth in my arms and kissed her. She drew back with a modest protest that the neighbors might see. The word neighbors goaded me. I shook my fist at their trim little houses and voiced a passion that had slowly been gathering strength.

"Damn the neighbors!" I cried

Ruth was startled. I don't often swear.

"Have they been talking about you?" she asked suddenly, her mouth hardening.

"I don't know. I don't care. But they hold you in ransom like bloody Moroccan pirates."

"How do they, Billy?"

"They won't let me work without taking it out of you and the boy."

Her head dropped for a second at mention of the boy, but it was soon lifted.

"Let's get away from them," she gasped. "Let's go where there are no neighbors."

"Would you?" I asked.

"I'd go to the ends of the earth with you, Billy," she answered quietly.

How plucky she was! I couldn't help but smile as I answered, more to myself:

"We haven't even the carfare to go to the

ends of the earth, Ruth. It will take all we have to pay our bills."

"All we have?" she asked.

No, not that. They could get only a little of what she and I had. They could take our belongings, that's all. And they hadn't got those yet.

But I had begun to hate those neighbors with a fierce, unreasoning hatred. In silence they dictated, without assisting. For a dozen years I had lived with them, played with them, been an integral part of their lives, and now they were worse than useless to me. There wasn't one of them big enough to receive me into his home for myself alone, apart from the work I did. There wasn't a true brother among them.

Our lives turn upon little things. They turn swiftly. Within fifteen minutes I had solved my problem in a fashion as unexpected as it was radical.

CHAPTER IV

WE EMIGRATE TO AMERICA

Going down the path to town bitterly and blindly, I met Murphy. He was a man with not a gray hair in his head who was a sort of man-of-all-work for the neighborhood. He took care of my furnace and fussed about the grounds when I was tied up at the office with night work. He stopped me with rather a shamefaced air.

"Beg pardon, sor," he began, "but I've got a bill comin' due on the new house—"

I remembered that I owed him some fifteen dollars. I had in my pocket just ten cents over my carfare. But what arrested my attention was the mention of a new house.

"You mean to tell me that you're putting up a house?"

"The bit of a rint, sor, in —— Street."

The contrast was dramatic. The man who emptied my ashes was erecting tenements and I was looking for work that would bring me

in food. My people had lived in this country some two hundred years or more, and Murphy had probably not been here over thirty. There was something wrong about this, but I seemed to be getting hold of an idea.

"How old are you, Murphy?" I asked.

"Goin' on sixty, sor."

"You came to America broke?"

"Dead broke, sor."

"You have a wife and children?"

"A woman and six childer."

Six! Think of it! And I had one.

"Children in school?"

I asked it almost in hope that here at least I would hold the advantage.

"Two of them in college, sor."

He spoke it proudly. Well he might. But to me it was confusing.

"And you have enough left over to put up a house?" I stammered.

"It's better than the bank," Murphy said apologetically.

"And you aren't an old man yet," I murmured.

"Old, sor?"

"Why you're young and strong and independent, Murphy. You're ——" But I

guess I talked a bit wild. I don't know what I said. I was breathless—lightheaded. I wanted to get back to Ruth.

"Pat," I said, seizing his hand—"Pat, you shall have the money within a week. I'm going to sell out and emigrate."

"Emigrate?" he gasped. "Where to?"

I laughed. The solution now seemed so easy.

"Why, to America, Pat. To America where you came thirty years ago." I left him staring at me. I hurried into the house with my heart in my throat.

I found Ruth in the sitting-room with her chin in her hands and her white forehead knotted in a frown. She didn't hear me come in, but when I touched her arm she jumped up, ashamed to think I had caught her looking even puzzled. But at sight of my face her expression changed in a flash.

"Oh, Billy," she cried, "it's good news?"

"It's a way out—if you approve," I answered.

"I do, Billy," she answered, without waiting to hear.

"Then listen," I said. "If we were living in England or Ireland or France or Germany

and found life as hard as this and some one left us five hundred dollars what would you advise doing?"

"Why, we'd emigrate, Billy," she said instantly.

"Exactly. Where to?"

"To America."

"Right," I cried. "And we'd be one out of a thousand if we didn't make good, wouldn't we?"

"Why, every one succeeds who comes here from somewhere else," she exclaimed.

"And why do they?" I demanded, getting excited with my idea. "Why do they? There are a dozen reasons. One is because they come as pioneers—with all the enthusiasm and eagerness of adventurers. Life is fresh and romantic to them over here. Hardships only add zest to the game. Another reason is that it is all a fine big gamble to them. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose. It's the same spirit that drives young New Englanders out west to try their luck, to preëmpt homesteads in the Northwest, to till the prairies. Another reason is that they come over here free—unbound by conventions. They can work as they please, live as they please.

They haven't any caste to hamper them. Another reason is that, being on the same great adventure, they are all brothers. They pull together. Still another reason is that as emigrants the whole United States stands ready to help them with schools and playgrounds and hospitals and parks."

I paused for breath. She cut in excitedly: "Then we're going out west?"

"No; we haven't the capital for that. By selling all our things we can pay our debts and have a few dollars over, but that wouldn't take us to Chicago. I'm not going ten miles from home."

"Where then, Billy?"

"You've seen the big ships come in along the water-front? They are bringing over hundreds of emigrants every year and landing them right on those docks. These people have had to cross the ocean to reach that point, but our ancestors made the voyage for you and me two hundred years ago. We're within ten miles of the wharf now."

She couldn't make out what I meant.

"Why, wife o' mine," I ran on, "all we need to do is to pack up, go down to the dock and start from there. We must join the emigrants

and follow them into the city. These are the only people who are finding America to-day. We must take up life among them; work as they work; live as they live. Why, I feel my back muscles straining even now; I feel the tingle of coming down the gangplank with our fortunes yet to make in this land of opportunity. Pasquale has done it; Murphy has done it. Don't you think I can do it?"

She looked up at me. I had never seen her face more beautiful. It was flushed and eager. She clutched my arm. Then she whispered:

"My man—my wonderful, good man!"

The primitive appellation was in itself like a whiff of salt air. It bore me back to the days when a husband's chief function was just that —being a man to his own good woman. We looked for a moment into each other's eyes. Then the same question was born to both of us in a moment.

"What of the boy?"

It was a more serious question to her, I think, than it was to me. I knew that the sons of other fathers and mothers had wrestled with that life and come out strong. There were Murphy's boys, for instance. Of course the life would be new to my boy, but the keen

competition ought to drive him to his best. His present life was not doing that. As for the coarser details from which he had been so sheltered—well, a man has to learn sooner or later, and I wasn't sure but that it was better for him to learn at an age when such things would offer no real temptations. With Ruth back of him I didn't worry much about that. Besides, the boy had let drop a phrase or two that made me suspect that even among his present associates that same ground was being explored.

"Ruth," I said, "I'm not worrying about Dick."

"He has been kept so fresh," she murmured.

"It isn't the fresh things that keep longest," I said.

"That's true, Billy," she answered.

Then she thought a moment, and as though with new inspiration answered me using again that same tender, primitive expression:

"I don't fear for my man-child."

When the boy came home from school that night I had a long talk with him. I told him frankly how I had been forced out of my position, how I had tried for another, how at length I had resolved to go pioneering just as

his great-grandfather had done among the Indians. As I thought, the naked adventure of it appealed to him. That was all I wished; it was enough to work on.

The next day I brought out a second-hand furniture dealer and made as good a bargain as I could with him for the contents of the house. We saved nothing but the sheer essentials for light housekeeping. These consisted of most of the cooking utensils, a half dozen plates, cups and saucers and about a dozen other pieces for the table, four tablecloths, all the bed linen, all our clothes, including some old clothes we had been upon the point of throwing away, a few personal gimcracks, and for furniture the following articles: the folding wooden kitchen table, a half dozen chairs, the cot bed in the boy's room, the iron bed in our room, the long mirror I gave Ruth on her birthday, and a sort of china closet that stood in the dining-room. To this we added bowls, pitchers, and lamps. All the rest, which included a full dining-room set, a full dinner set of china, the furnishings of the front room, including books and book case, chairs, rugs, pictures and two or three good chairs, a full bed-room set in our room and a cheaper one

in the boy's room, piazza furnishings, garden tools, and forty odds and ends all of which had cost me first and last something like two thousand dollars, I told the dealer to lump together. He looked it over and bid six hundred dollars. I saw Ruth swallow hard, for she had taken good care of everything so that to us it was worth as much to-day as we had paid for it. But I accepted the offer without dickering, for it was large enough to serve my ends. It would pay off all our debts and leave us a hundred dollars to the good. It was the first time since I married that I had been that much ahead.

That afternoon I saw Murphy and hired of him the top tenement of his new house. It was in the Italian quarter of the city and my flat consisted of four rooms. The rent was three dollars a week. Murphy looked surprised enough at the change in my affairs and I made him promise not to gossip to the neighbors about where I'd gone.

"Faith, sor," he said, "and they wouldn't believe it if I told them."

This wasn't all I accomplished that day. I bought a pair of overalls and presented myself at the office of a contractor's agent. I didn't

have any trouble in getting in there and I didn't feel like a beggar as I took my place in line with about a dozen foreigners. I looked them over with a certain amount of self-confidence. Most of them were undersized men with sagging shoulders and primitive faces. With their big eyes they made me think of shaggy Shetland ponies. Lined up man for man with my late associates they certainly looked like an inferior lot. I studied them with curiosity; there must be more in them than showed on the surface to bring them over here—there must be something that wasn't in the rest of us for them to make good the way they did. In the next six months I meant to find out what that was. In the meantime just sitting there among them I felt as though I had more elbow room than I had had since I was eighteen. Before me as before them a continent stretched its great length and breadth. They laughed and joked among themselves and stared about at everything with eager, curious eyes. They were ready for anything, and everything was ready for them —the ditch, the mines, the railroads, the wheat fields. Wherever things were growing and needed men to help them grow, they would

play their part. They say there's plenty of room at the top, but there's plenty of room at the bottom, too. It's in the middle that men get pinched.

I worked my way up to the window where a sallow, pale-faced clerk sat in front of a big book. He gave me a start, he was such a contrast to the others. In my new enthusiasm I wanted to ask him why he didn't come out and get in line the other side of the window. He yawned as he wrote down my name. I didn't have to answer more than half a dozen questions before he told me to report for work Monday at such and such a place. I asked him what the work was and he looked up.

"Subway," he answered.

I asked him how much the pay was. He looked me over at this. I don't know what he thought I was.

"Dollar and a half—nine hours."

"All right," I answered.

He gave me a slip of paper and I hurried out. It hadn't taken ten minutes. And a dollar and a half a day was nine dollars a week! It was almost twice as much as I had started on with the United; it was over a third of

what I had been getting after my first ten years of hard work with them. It seemed too good to be true. Taking out the rent, this left me six dollars for food. That was as much as it had cost Ruth and me the first year we were married. There was no need of going hungry on that.

I came back home jubilant. Ruth at first took the prospect of my digging in a ditch a bit hard, but that was only because she contrasted it with my former genteel employment.

"Why, girl," I explained, "it's no more than I would have to do if we took a homestead out west. I'd as soon dig in Massachusetts as Montana."

She felt of my arm. It's a big arm. Then she smiled. It was the last time she mentioned the subject.

We didn't say anything to the neighbors until the furniture began to go out. Then the women flocked in and Ruth was hard pressed to keep our secret. I sat upstairs and chuckled as I heard her replies. She says it's the only time I ever failed to stand by her, but it didn't seem to me like anything but a joke.

"We shall want to keep track of you," said

little Mrs. Grover. "Where shall we address you?"

"Oh, I can't tell," answered Ruth, truthfully enough.

"Are you going far?"

"Yes. Oh—a long, long way."

That was true enough too. We couldn't have gone farther out of their lives if we'd sailed for Australia.

And so they kept it up. That night we made a round of the houses and everyone was very much surprised and very much grieved and very curious. To all their inquiries, I made the same reply; that I was going to emigrate. Some of them looked wistful.

"Jove," said Brown, who was with the insurance company, "but I wish I had the nerve to do that. I suppose you're going west?"

"We're going west first," I answered.

The road to the station was almost due west.

"They say there are great chances out in that country," he said. "It isn't so overcrowded as here."

"I don't know about that," I answered, "but there are chances enough."

Some of the women cried and all the men shook hands cordially and wished us good

luck. But it didn't mean much to me. The time I needed their handshakes was gone. I learned later that as a result of our secrecy I was variously credited with having lost my reason with my job; with having inherited a fortune, with having gambled in the market, with, thrown in for good measure, a darker hint about having misappropriated funds of the United Woollen. But somehow their nastiest gossip did not disturb me. It had no power to harm either me or mine. I was already beyond their reach. Before I left I wished them all Godspeed on the dainty journey they were making in their cockleshell. Then so far as they were concerned I dropped off into the sea with my wife and boy.

CHAPTER V

WE PROSPECT

We were lucky in getting into a new tenement and lucky in securing the top floor. This gave us easy access to the flat roof five stories above the street. From here we not only had a magnificent view of the harbor, but even on the hottest days felt something of a sea breeze. Coming down here in June we appreciated that before the summer was over.

The street was located half a dozen blocks from the waterfront and was inhabited almost wholly by Italians, save for a Frenchman on the corner who ran a bake-shop. The street itself was narrow and dirty enough, but it opened into a public square which was decidedly picturesque. This was surrounded by tiny shops and foreign banks, and was always alive with color and incident. The vegetables displayed on the sidewalk stands, the gay hues of the women's gowns, the gaudy kerchiefs of the men, gave it a kaleidoscopic effect that

made it as fascinating to us as a trip abroad. The section was known as Little Italy, and so far as we were concerned was as interesting as Italy itself.

There were four other families in the house, but the only things we used in common were the narrow iron stairway leading upstairs and the roof. The other tenants, however, seldom used the latter at all except to hang out their occasional washings. For the first month or so we saw little of these people. We were far too busy to make overtures, and as for them they let us severely alone. They were not noisy, and except for a sick baby on the first floor we heard little of them above the clamor of the street below. We had four rooms. The front room we gave to the boy, the next room we ourselves occupied, the third room we used for a sitting- and dining-room, while the fourth was a small kitchen with running water. As compared with our house the quarters at first seemed cramped, but we had cut down our furniture to what was absolutely essential, and as soon as our eyes ceased making the comparison we were surprised to find how comfortable we were. In the dining-room, for instance, we had nothing but three

chairs, a folding table and a closet for the dishes. Lounging chairs and so forth we did away with altogether. Nor was there any need of making provision for possible guests. Here throughout the whole house was the greatest saving. I took a fierce pleasure at first in thus caring for my own alone.

The boy's room contained a cot, a chair, a rug and a few of his personal treasures; our own room contained just the bed, chair and washstand. Ruth added a few touches with pictures and odds and ends that took off the bare aspect without cluttering up. In two weeks these scant quarters were every whit as much home as our tidy little house had been. That was Ruth's part in it. She'd make a home out of a prison.

On the second day we were fairly settled, and that night after the boy had gone to bed Ruth sat down at my side with a pad and pencil in her hand.

"Billy," she said, "there's one thing we're going to do in this new beginning: we're going to save—if it's only ten cents a week."

I shook my head doubtfully.

"I'm afraid you can't until I get a raise," I said.

"We tried waiting for raises before," she answered.

"I know, but—"

"There aren't going to be any buts," she answered decidedly.

"But six dollars a week—"

"Is six dollars a week," she broke in. "We must live on five-fifty, that's all."

"With steak thirty cents a pound?"

"We won't have steak. That's the point. Our neighbors around here don't look starved, and they have larger families than ours. And they don't even buy intelligently."

"How do you know that?"

"I've been watching them at the little stores in the square. They pay there as much for half-decayed stuff as they'd have to pay for fresh odds and ends at the big market."

She rested her pad upon her knee.

"Now in the first place, Billy, we're going to live much more simply."

"We've never been extravagant," I said.

"Not in a way," she answered slowly, "but in another way we have. I've been doing a lot of thinking in the last few days and I see now where we've had a great many unnecessary things."

"Not for the last few weeks, anyhow," I said.

"Those don't count. But before that I mean. For instance there's coffee. It's a luxury. Why we spent almost thirty cents a week on that alone."

"I know but—"

"There's another but. There's no nourishment in coffee and we can't afford it. We'll spend that money for milk. We must have good milk and you must get it for me somewhere up town. I don't like the looks of the milk around here. That will be eight cents a day."

"Better have two quarts," I suggested.

She thought a moment.

"Yes," she agreed, "two quarts, because that's going to be the basis of our food. That's a dollar twelve cents a week."

She made up a little face at this. I smiled grandly.

"Now for breakfast we must have oatmeal every morning. And we'll get it in bulk. I've priced it and it's only a little over three cents a pound at some of the stores."

"And the kind we've always had?"

"About twelve when it's done up in pack-

ages. That's about the proportion by which I expect to cut down everything. But you'll have to eat milk on it instead of cream. Then we'll use a lot of potatoes. They are very good baked for breakfast. And with them you may have salt fish—oh, there are a dozen nice ways of fixing that. And you may have griddle cakes and—you wait and see the things I'll give you for breakfast. You'll have to have a good luncheon of course, but we'll have our principal meal when you get back from work at night. But you won't get steak. When we do get meat we'll buy soup bones and meat we can boil. And instead of pies and cakes we'll have nourishing puddings of corn-starch and rice. There's another good point—rice. It's cheap and we'll have a lot of it. Look at how the Japanese live on it day after day and keep fat and strong. Then there's cheap fish; rock cod and such to make good chowders of or to fry in pork fat like the bass and trout I used to have back home. Then there's baked beans. We ought to have them at least twice a week in the winter. But this summer we'll live mostly on fish and vegetables. I can get them fresh at the market."

"It sounds good," I said.

"Just you wait," she cried excitedly. "I'll fatten up both you and the boy."

"And yourself, little woman," I reminded her. "I'm not going to take the saving out of you."

"Don't you worry about me," she answered. "This will be easier than the other life. I shan't have to worry about clothes or dinners or parties for the boy. And it isn't going to take any time at all to keep these four rooms clean and sweet."

I took the rest of the week as a sort of vacation and used it to get acquainted with my new surroundings. It's a fact that this section of the city which for twenty years had been within a short walk of my office was as foreign to me as Europe. I had never before been down here and all I knew about it was through the ocasional head-lines in the papers in connection with stabbing affrays. For the first day or two I felt as though I ought to carry a revolver. Whenever I was forced to leave Ruth alone in the house I instructed her upon no circumstances to open the door. The boy and I arranged a secret rap—an idea that pleased him mightily—and until she heard the single knock followed by two quick sharp ones,

she was not to answer. But in wandering around among these people it was difficult to think of them as vicious. The Italian element was a laughing, indolent-appearing group; the scattered Jewish folk were almost timid and kept very much to themselves. I didn't find a really tough face until I came to the water front where they spoke English.

On the third morning after a breakfast of oatmeal and hot biscuit—and, by the way, Ruth effected a fifty per cent. saving right here by using the old-fashioned formula of soda and cream of tartar instead of baking powder—and baked potatoes, Ruth and the boy and myself started on an exploring trip. Our idea was to get a line on just what our opportunities were down here and to nose out the best and cheapest places to buy. The thing that impressed us right off was the big advantage we had in being within easy access of the big provision centres. We were within ten minutes' walk of the market, within fifteen of the water front, within three of the square and within twenty of the department stores. At all of these places we found special bargains for the day made to attract in town those from a distance. If one rose early and reached

them about as soon as they were opened one could often buy things almost at cost and sometimes below cost. For instance, we went up town to one of the largest but cheaper grade department stores—we had heard its name for years but had never been inside the building—and we found that in their grocery department they had special mark-downs every day in the week for a limited supply of goods. We bought sugar this day at a cent a pound less than the market price and good beans for two cents a quart less. It sounds at first like rather picayune saving but it counts up at the end of the year. Then every stall in the market had its bargain of meats—wholesome bits but unattractive to the careless buyer. We bought here for fifty cents enough round steak for several good meals of hash. We couldn't have bought it for less than a dollar in the suburbs and even at that we wouldn't have known anything about it for the store was too far for Ruth to make a personal visit and the butcher himself would never have mentioned such an odd end to a member of our neighborhood.

We enjoyed wandering around this big market which in itself was like a trip to another

land. Later one of our favorite amusements was to come down here at night and watch the hustling crowds and the lights and the pretty colors and confusion. It reminded Ruth, she said, of a country fair. She always carried a pad and pencil and made notes of good places to buy. I still have those and am referring to them now as I write this.

"Blanks," she writes (I omit the name), "nice clean store with pleasant salesman. Has good soup bones."

Again, "Blank and Blank—good place to buy sausage."

Here too the market gardeners gathered as early as four o'clock with their vegetables fresh from the suburbs. They did mostly a wholesale business but if one knew how it was always possible to buy of them a cabbage or a head of lettuce or a few apples or a peck of potatoes. They were a genial, ruddy-cheeked lot and after a while they came to know Ruth. Often I'd go up there with her before work and she with a basket on her arm would buy for the day. It was always, "Good morning, miss," in answer to her smile. They were respectful whether I was along or not. But for that matter I never knew anyone who

wasn't respectful to Ruth. They used to like to see her come, I think, for she stood out in rather marked contrast to the bowed figures of the other women. Later on they used to save out for her any particularly choice vegetable they might have. She insisted however in paying them an extra penny for such things.

From the market we went down a series of narrow streets which led to the water front. Here the vessels from the Banks come in to unload. The air was salty and though to us at first the wharves seemed dirty we got used to them, after a while, and enjoyed the smell of the fish fresh from the water.

Seeing whole push carts full of fish and watching them handled with a pitch fork as a man tosses hay didn't whet our appetites any, but when we remembered that it was these same fish—a day or two older,—for which we had been paying double the price charged for them here the difference overcame our scruples. The men here interested me. I found that while the crew of every schooner numbered a goodly per cent. of foreigners, still the greater part were American born. The new comers as a rule bought small launches of their own and went into business for themselves. The Eng-

lish speaking portion of the crews were also as a rule the rougher element. The loafers and hangers-on about the wharves were also English speaking. This was a fact that later on I found to be rather significant and to hold true in a general way in all branches of the lower class of labor.

The barrooms about here—always a pretty sure index of the men of any community—were more numerous and of decidedly a rougher character than those about the square. A man would be a good deal better justified in carrying a revolver on this street than he would in Little Italy. I never allowed Ruth to come down here alone.

From here we wandered back and I found a public playground and bathhouse by the water's edge. This attracted me at once. I investigated this and found it offered a fine opportunity for bathing. Little dressing-rooms were provided and for a penny a man could get a clean towel and for five cents a bathing suit. There was no reason that I could see, however, why we shouldn't provide our own. It was within an easy ten minutes of the flat and I saw right then where I would get a dip every day. It would be a great thing for the

boy, too. I had always wanted him to learn to swim.

On the way home we passed through the Jewish quarter and I made a note of the clothing offered for sale here. The street was lined with second hand stores with coats and trousers swinging over the sidewalk, and the windows were filled with odd lots of shoes. Then too there were the pawnshops. I'd always thought of a pawnshop as not being exactly respectable and had the feeling that anyone who secured anything from one of them was in a way a receiver of stolen goods. But as I passed them now, I received a new impression. They seemed, down here, as legitimate a business as the second hand stores. The windows offered an assortment of everything from watches to banjoes and guns but among them I also noticed many carpenter's tools and so forth. That might be a useful thing to remember.

It was odd how in a day our point of view had changed. If I had brought Ruth and the boy down through here a month before, we would all, I think, have been more impressed by the congestion and the picturesque details of the squalor than anything else. We would

have picked our way gingerly and Ruth would have sighed often in pity and, comparing the lives of these people with our own, would probably have made an extra generous contribution to the Salvation Army the next time they came round. I'm not saying now that there isn't misery enough there and in every like section of every city, but I'll say that in a great many cases the same people who grovel in the filth here would grovel in a different kind of filth if they had ten thousand a year. At that you can't blame them greatly for they don't know any better. But when you learn, as I learned later, that some of the proprietors of these second hand stores and fly-blown butcher shops have sons in Harvard and daughters in Wellesley, it makes you think. But I'm running ahead.

The point was that now that we felt ourselves in a way one of these people and viewed the street not from the superior height of native-born Americans but just as emigrants, neither the soiled clothes of the inhabitants nor the cluttered street swarming with laughing youngsters impressed us unfavorably at all. The impassive men smoking cigarettes at their doors looked contented enough, the women

were not such as to excite pity, and if you noticed, there were as many children around the local soda water fountains as you'd find in a suburban drug store. They all had clothes enough and appeared well fed and if some of them looked pasty, the sweet stuff in the stores was enough to account for that.

At any rate we came back to our flat that day neither depressed nor discouraged but decidedly in better spirits. Of course we had seen only the surface and I suspected that when we really got into these lives we'd find a bad condition of things. It must be so, for that was the burden of all we read. But we would have time enough to worry about that when we discovered it for ourselves.

CHAPTER VI

I BECOME A DAY LABORER

That night Ruth and I had a talk about the boy. We both came back from our walk, with him more on our minds than anything else. He had been interested in everything and had asked about a thousand questions and gone to bed eager to be out on the street again the next day. We knew we couldn't keep him cooped up in the flat all the time and of course both Ruth and I were going to be too busy to go out with him every time he went. As for letting him run loose around these streets with nothing to do, that would be sheer foolhardiness. It was too late in the season to enroll him in the public schools and even that would have left him idle during the long summer months.

We talked some at first of sending him off into the country to a farm. There were two or three families back where Ruth had lived who might be willing to take him for three or

four dollars a week and we had the money left over from the sale of our household goods to cover that. But this would mean the sacrifice of our emergency fund which we wished to preserve more for the boy's sake than our own and it would mean leaving Ruth very much alone.

"I'll do it, Billy," she said bravely, "but can't we wait a day or two before deciding? And I think I can *make* time to get out with him. I'll get up earlier in the morning and I'll leave my work at night until after he's gone to bed."

So she would. She'd have worked all night to keep him at home and then gone out with him all day if it had been possible. I saw it would be dragging the heart out of her to send the boy away and made up my mind right then and there that some other solution must be found for the problem. Good Lord, after I'd led her down here the least I could do was to let her keep the one. And to tell the truth I found my own heart sink at the suggestion.

"What do the boys round here do in the summer?" she asked.

I didn't know and I made up my mind to find out. The next day I went down to a settlement house which I remembered passing at

some time or other. I didn't know what it was but it sounded like some sort of philanthropic enterprise for the neighborhood and if so they ought to be able to answer my questions there. The outside of the building was not particularly attractive but upon entering I was pleasantly surprised at the air of cleanliness and comfort which prevailed. There were a number of small boys around and in one room I saw them reading and playing checkers. I sought out the secretary and found him a pleasant young fellow though with something of the professional pleasantness which men in this work seem to acquire. He smiled too much and held my hand a bit too long to suit me. He took me into his office and offered me a chair. I told him briefly that I had just moved down here and had a boy of ten whom I wished to keep off the streets and keep occupied. I asked him what the boys around here did during the summer.

"Most of them work," he answered.

I hadn't thought of this.

"What do they do?"

"A good many sell papers, some of them serve as errand boys and others help their parents."

Dick was certainly too inexperienced for the first two jobs and there was nothing in my work he could do to help. Then the man began to ask me questions. He was evidently struck by the fact that I didn't seem to be in place here. I answered briefly that I had been a clerk all my life, had lost my position and was now a common day laborer. The boy, I explained, was not yet used to his life down here and I wanted to keep him occupied until he got his strength.

"You're right," he answered. "Why don't you bring him in here?"

"What would he do here?"

"It's a good loafing place for him and we have some evening classes."

"I want him at home nights," I answered.

"The Y. M. C. A. has summer classes which begin a little later on. Why don't you put him into some of those?"

I had always heard of the Y. M. C. A., but I had never got into touch with it, for I thought it was purely a religious organization. But that proposition sounded good. I'd passed the building a thousand times but had never been inside. I thanked him and started to leave.

"I hope this won't be your last visit," he said cordially. "Come down and see what we're doing. You'll find a lot of boys here at night."

"Thanks," I answered.

I went direct to the Y. M. C. A. building. Here again I was surprised to find a most attractive interior. It looked like the inside of a prosperous club house. I don't know what I expected but I wouldn't have been startled if I'd found a hall filled with wooden settees and a prayer meeting going on. I had a lot of such preconceived notions knocked out of my head in the next few years.

In response to my questions I received replies that made me feel I'd strayed by mistake into some university. For that matter it *was* a university. There was nothing from the primary class in English to a professional education in the law that a man couldn't acquire here for a sum that was astonishingly small. The most of the classes cost nothing after payment of the membership fee of ten dollars. The instructors were, many of them, the same men who gave similar courses at a neighboring college. Not only that, but the hours were so arranged as to accommodate workers of all classes. If you couldn't attend in the day-

time, you could at night. I was astonished to think that this opportunity had always been at my hand and I had never suspected it. In the ten years before I was married I could have qualified as a lawyer or almost anything else.

This was not all; a young man took me over the building and showed me the library, the reading-room, rooms where the young men gathered for games, and then down stairs to the well equipped gymnasium with its shower baths. Here a boy could take a regular course in gymnasium work under a skilled instructor or if he showed any skill devote himself to such sports as basketball, running, baseball or swimming. In addition to these advantages amusements were provided through the year in the form of lectures, amateur shows and music. In the summer, special opportunities were offered for out-door sports. Moreover the Association managed summer camps where for a nominal fee the boys could enjoy the life of the woods. A boy must be poor indeed who could not afford most of these opportunities. And if he was out of work the employment bureau conducted here would help him to a position. I came back to the main

office wondering still more how in the world I'd ever missed such chances all these years. It was a question I asked myself many times during the next few months. And the answer seemed to lie in the dead level of that other life. We never lifted our eyes; we never looked around us. If we were hard pressed either we accepted our lot resignedly or cursed our luck, and let it go at that. These opportunities were for a class which had no lot and didn't know the meaning of luck. The others could have had them, too—can have them—for the taking, but neither by education nor temperament are they qualified to do so. There's a good field for missionary work there for someone.

Before I came out of the building I had enrolled Dick as a member and picked out for him a summer course in English in which he was a bit backward. I also determined to start him in some regular gymnasium work. He needed hardening up.

I came home and announced my success to Ruth and she was delighted. I suspected by the look in her eyes that she had been worrying all day for fear there would be no alternative but to send the boy off.

"I knew you would find a way," she said excitedly.

"I wish I'd found it twenty years ago," I said regretfully. "Then you'd have a lawyer for a husband instead of a—."

"Hush," she answered putting her hand over my mouth. "I've a man for a husband and that's all I care about."

The way she said it made me feel that after all being a man was what counted and that if I could live up to that day by day, no matter what happened, then I could be well satisfied. I guess the city directory was right when before now it couldn't define me any more definitely than, "clerk." And there is about as much man in a clerk as in a valet. They are both shadows.

The boy fell in with my plans eagerly, for the gymnasium work made him forget the study part of the programme. The next day I took him up there and saw him introduced to the various department heads. I paid his membership fee and they gave him a card which made him feel like a real club man. I tell you it took a weight off my mind.

On the Monday following our arrival in our new quarters, I rose at five-thirty, put on my

overalls and had breakfast. I ate a large bowl of oatmeal, a generous supply of flapjacks, made of some milk that had soured, sprinkled with molasses, and a cup of hot black coffee —the last of a can we had brought down with us among the left-over kitchen supplies.

For lunch Ruth had packed my box with cold cream-of-tartar biscuit, well buttered, a bit of cheese, a little bowl of rice pudding, two hard-boiled eggs and a pint bottle of cold coffee. I kissed her goodby and started out on foot for the street where I was to take up my work. The foreman demanded my name, registered me, told me where to find a shovel and assigned me to a gang under another foreman. At seven o'clock I took my place with a dozen Italians and began to shovel. My muscles were decidedly flabby, and by noon I began to find it hard work. I was glad to stop and eat my lunch. I couldn't remember a meal in five years that tasted as good as that did. My companions watched me curiously—perhaps a bit suspiciously—but they chattered in a foreign tongue among themselves and rather shied away from me. On that first day I made up my mind to one thing —I would learn Italian before the year was

done, and know something more about these people and their ways. They were the key to the contractor's problem and it would pay a man to know how to handle them. As I watched the boss over us that day it did not seem to me that he understood very well.

From one to five the work became an increasing strain. Even with my athletic training I wasn't used to such a prolonged test of one set of muscles. My legs became heavy, my back ached, and my shoulders finally refused to obey me except under the sheer command of my will. I knew, however, that time would remedy this. I might be sore and lame for a day or two, but I had twice the natural strength of these short, close-knit foreigners. The excitement and novelty of the employment helped me through those first few days. I felt the joy of the pioneer—felt the sweet sense of delving in the mother earth. It touched in me some responsive chord that harked back to my ancestors who broke the rocky soil of New England. Of the life of my fellows bustling by on the earth-crust overhead—those fellows of whom so lately I had been one—I was not at all conscious. I might have been at work on some new planet for all they touched my

new life. I could see them peering over the wooden rail around our excavation as they stopped to stare down at us, but I did not connect them with myself. And yet I felt closer to this old city than ever before. I thrilled with the joy of the constructor, the builder, even in this humble capacity. I felt superior to those for whom I was building. In a coarse way I suppose it was a reflection of some artistic sense—something akin to the creative impulse. I can say truthfully that at the end of that first day I came home—begrimed and sore as I was—with a sense of fuller life than so far I had ever experienced.

I found Ruth waiting for me with some anxiety. She came into my soil-stained arms as eagerly as a bride. It was good. It took all the soreness out of me. Before supper I took the boy and we went down to the public baths on the waterfront and there I dived and splashed and swam like a young whale. The sting of the cold salt water was all the further balm I needed. I came out tingling and fit right then for another nine-hour day. But when I came back I threatened our first week's savings at the supper-table. Ruth had made

more hot griddle-cakes and I kept her at the stove until I was ashamed to do it longer. The boy, too, after his plunge, showed a better appetite than for weeks.

CHAPTER VII

NINE DOLLARS A WEEK

The second day, I woke up lame and stiff but I gave myself a good brisk rub down and kneaded my arm and leg muscles until they were pretty well limbered up. The thing that pleased me was the way I felt towards my new work that second morning. I'd been a bit afraid of a reaction—of waking up with all the romance gone. That, I knew, would be deadly. Once let me dwell on the naked material facts of my condition and I'd be lost. That's true of course in any occupation. The man who works without an inspiration of some sort is not only discontented but a poor workman. I remember distinctly that when I opened my eyes and realized my surroundings and traced back the incidents of yesterday to the ditch, I was concerned principally with the problem of a stone in our path upon which we had been working. I wanted to get back to it. We had worked upon it for

an hour without fully uncovering it and I was as eager as the foreman to learn whether it was a ledge rock or just a fragment. This interest was not associated with the elevated road for whom the work was being done, nor the contractor who had undertaken the job, nor the foreman who was supervising it. It was a question which concerned only me and Mother Earth who seemed to be doing her best to balk us at every turn. I forgot the sticky, wet clay in which I had floundered for nine hours, forgot the noisome stench which at times we were forced to breathe, forgot my lame hands and back. I recalled only the problem itself and the skill with which the man they called Anton' handled his crow bar. He was a master of it. In removing the smaller slabs which lay around the big one he astonished me with his knowledge of how to place the bar. He'd come to my side where I was prying with all my strength and with a wave of his hand for me to stand back, would adjust two or three smaller rocks as a fulcrum and then, with the gentlest of movements, work the half-ton weight inch by inch to where he wanted it. He could swing the rock to the right or left, raise or lower it, at will,

and always he made the weight of the rock, against which I had striven so vainly, do the work. That was something worth learning. I wanted to get back and study him. I wanted to get back and finish uncovering that rock. I wanted to get back and bring the job as a whole to a finish so as to have a new one to tackle. Even at the end of that first day I felt I had learned enough to make myself a man of greater power than I was the day before. And always in the background was the unknown goal to which this toil was to lead. I hadn't yet stopped to figure out what the goal was but that it was worth while I had no doubt for I was no longer stationary. I was a constructor. I was in touch with a big enterprise of development.

I don't know that I've made myself clear. I wasn't very clear in my own mind then but I know that I had a very conscious impression of the sort which I've tried to put into words. And I know that it filled me with a great big joy. I never woke up with any such feeling when with the United Woollen. My only thought in the morning then was how much time I must give myself to catch the six-

thirty. When I reached the office I hung up my hat and coat and sat down to the impersonal figures like an automaton. There was nothing of me in the work; there couldn't be. How petty it seemed now! I suppose the company, as an industrial enterprise, was in the line of development, but that idea never penetrated as far as the clerical department. We didn't feel it any more than the adding machines do.

Ruth had a good breakfast for me and when I came into the kitchen she was trying to brush the dried clay off my overalls.

"Good Heavens!" I said, "don't waste your strength doing that."

She looked up from her task with a smile.

"I'm not going to let you get slack down here" she said.

"But those things will look just as bad again five minutes after I've gone down the ladder."

"But I don't intend they shall look like this on your way to the ladder," she answered.

"All right," I said "then let me have them. I'll do it myself."

"Have you shaved?" she asked.

I rubbed my hand over my chin. It wasn't very bad and I'd made up my mind I wouldn't shave every day now.

"No," I said. "But twice or three times a week—"

"Billy!" she broke in, "that will never do. You're going down to your new business looking just as ship-shape as you went to the old. You don't belong to that contractor; you belong to me."

In the meanwhile the boy came in with my heavy boots which he had brushed clean and oiled. There was nothing left for me to do but to shave and I'll admit I felt better for it.

"Do you want me to put on a high collar?" I asked.

"Didn't you find the things I laid out for you?"

I hadn't looked about. I'd put on the things I took off. She led me back into the bed room, and over a chair I saw a clean change of underclothing and a new grey flannel shirt.

"Where did you get this?" I asked.

"I bought it for a dollar," she answered. "It's too much to pay. I can make one for fifty cents as soon as I get time to sew."

That's the way Ruth was. Every day after this she made me change, after I came back from my swim, into the business suit I wore when I came down here, and which now by contrast looked almost new. She even made me wear a tie with my flannel shirt. Every morning I started out clean shaven and with my work clothes as fresh as though I were a contractor myself. I objected at first because it seemed too much for her to do to wash the things every day, but she said it was a good deal easier than washing them once a week. Incidentally that was one of her own little schemes for saving trouble and it seemed to me a good one; instead of collecting her soiled clothes for seven days and then tearing herself all to pieces with a whole hard forenoon's work, she washed a little every day. By this plan it took her only about an hour each morning to keep all the linen in the house clean and sweet. We had the roof to dry it on and she never ironed anything except perhaps the tablecloths and handkerchiefs. We had no company to cater to and as long as we knew things were clean that's all we cared.

We got around the rock all right. It proved not to be a ledge after all. I myself,

however, didn't accomplish as much as I did the first day, for I was slower in my movements. On the other hand, I think I improved a little in my handling of the crowbar. At the noon hour I tried to start a conversation with Anton,' but he understood little English and I knew no Italian, so we didn't get far. As he sat in a group of his fellow countrymen laughing and jabbering he made me feel distinctly like an outsider. There were one or two English-speaking workmen besides myself, but somehow they didn't interest me as much as these Italians. It may have been my imagination but they seemed to me a decidedly inferior lot. As a rule they were men who took the job only to keep themselves from starving and quit at the end of a week or two only to come back when they needed more money.

I must make an exception of an Irishman I will call Dan Rafferty. He was a big blue-eyed fellow, full of fun and fight, with a good natured contempt of the Dagoes, and was a born leader. I noticed, the first day, that he came nearer being the boss of the gang than the foreman, and I suspect the latter himself noticed it, for he seemed to have it in for Dan. There never was an

especially dirty job to be done but what Dan was sent. He always obeyed but he used to slouch off with his big red fist doubled up, muttering curses that brought out his brogue at its best. Later on he confided in me what he was going to do to that boss. If he had carried out his threats he would long since have been electrocuted and I would have lost a good friend. Several times I thought the two men were coming to blows but though Dan would have dearly loved a fight and could have handled a dozen men like the foreman, he always managed to control himself in time to avoid it.

"I don't wanter be after losin' me job for the dirthy spalpeen," he growled to me.

But he came near it in a way he wasn't looking for later in the week. It was Friday and half a dozen of us had been sent down to work on the second level. It was damp and suffocating down there, fifty feet below the street. I felt as though I had gone into the mines. I didn't like it but I knew that there was just as much to learn here as above and that it must all be learned eventually. The sides were braced with heavy timbers like a mine shaft to prevent the dirt from falling in

and there was the constant danger that in spite of this it might cave in. We went down by rough ladders made by nailing strips of board across two pieces of joist and the work down there was back-breaking and monotonous. We heaved the dirt into a big iron bucket lowered by the hoisting engine above. It was heavy, wet soil that weighed like lead.

From the beginning the men complained of headaches and one by one they crawled up the ladder again for fresh air. Others were sent down but at the end of an hour they too retreated. Dan and I stuck it out for a while. Then I began to get dizzy myself. I didn't know what the trouble was but when I began to wobble a bit Dan placed his hand on my shoulder.

"Betther climb out o' here," he said. "I'm thinkin' it's gas."

At that time I didn't know what sewer gas was. I couldn't smell anything and thought he must be mistaken.

"You'd better come too," I answered, making for the ladder.

He wasn't coming but I couldn't get up very well without him so he followed along behind. At the top we found the foreman

fighting mad and trying to spur on another gang to go down. They wouldn't move. When he saw us come up he turned upon Dan.

"Who ordered you out of there?" he growled.

"The gas," answered Dan.

"Gas be damned," shouted the foreman. "You're a bunch of white livered cowards—all of you."

I saw Dan double up his fists and start towards the man. The latter checked him with a command.

"Go back down there or you're fired," he said to him.

Dan turned red. Then I saw his jaws come together.

"Begod!" he answered. "*You* shan't fire me, anyhow."

Without another word he started down the ladder again. I saw the Italians crowd together and watch him. By that time my head was clearer but my legs were weak. I sat down a moment uncertain what to do. Then I heard someone shout:

"By God, he's right! He's lying there at the bottom."

I started towards the ladder but some one

shoved me back. Then I thought of the bucket. It was above ground and I staggered towards it gaining strength at each step. I jumped in and shouted to the engineer to lower me. He obeyed from instinct. I went down, down, down to what seemed like the center of the earth. When the bucket struck the ground I was dizzy again but I managed to get out, heave the unconscious Dan in and pile on top of him myself. When I came to, I was in an ambulance on my way to the hospital but by the time I had reached the emergency room I had taken a grip on myself. I knew that if ever Ruth heard of this she would never again be comfortable. When they took us out I was able to walk a little. The doctors wanted to put me to bed but I refused to go. I sat there for about an hour while they worked over Dan. When I found that he would be all right by morning I insisted upon going out. I had a bad headache, but I knew the fresh air would drive this away and so it did, though it left me weak.

One of the hardest day's work I ever did in my life was killing time from then until five o'clock. Of course the papers got hold of it and that gave me another scare but

luckily the nearest they came to my name was Darlinton, so no harm was done. And they didn't come within a mile of getting the real story. When in a later edition one of them published my photograph I felt absolutely safe for they had me in a full beard and thinner than I've ever been in my life.

When I came home at my usual time looking a bit white perhaps but otherwise normal enough, the first question Ruth asked me was:

"What have you done with your dinner pail, Billy?"

Isn't a man always sure to do some such fool thing as that, when he's trying to keep something quiet from the wife? I had to explain that I had forgotten it and that was enough to excite suspicion at any time. She kept me uneasy for ten minutes and the best I could do was to admit finally that I wasn't feeling very well. Whereupon she made me go to bed and fussed over me all the evening and worried all the next day.

I reported for work as usual in the morning and found we had a new foreman. It was a relief because I guess if Dan hadn't knocked down the other one, someone else

would have done it sooner or later. At that the man had taught me something about sewer gas and that is when you begin to feel dizzy fifty feet below the street, it's time to go up the ladder about as fast as your wobbly legs will let you, even if you don't smell anything.

Rafferty didn't turn up for two or three days. When he did appear it was with a simple:

"Mawnin, mon."

It wasn't until several days later I learned that the late foreman had left town nursing a black eye and a cut on one cheek such as might have been made by a set of red knuckles backed by an arm the size of a small ham.

On Saturday night of that first week I came home with nine dollars in my pocket. I'll never be prouder again than I was when I handed them over to Ruth. And Ruth will never again be prouder than she was when, after she had laid aside three of them for the rent and five for current expenses, she picked out a one-dollar bill and, crossing the room, placed it in the ginger jar. This was a little blue affair in which we had always dropped what pennies and nickels we could spare.

"There's our nest-egg," she announced.

"You don't mean to tell me you're that much ahead of the game the first week?"

"Look here, Billy," she answered.

She brought out an itemized list of everything she had bought from last Monday, including Sunday's dinner. I've kept that list. Many of the things she had bought were not yet used up but she had computed the cost of the amount actually used. Here it is as I copied it off:

Flour, .25
Lard, .15
Cream of tartar and soda, .05
Oat meal, .04
Molasses, .05
Sugar, .12
Potatoes, .20
Rice, .06
Milk, 1.12
Eggs, .24
Rye bread, .10
Sausages, .22
Lettuce, .03
Beans, .12
Salt pork, .15

Corn meal, .06
Graham meal, .05
Butter, .45
Cheese, .06
Shin of beef, .39
Fish, .22
Oil, .28
Soap, .09
Vinegar, salt and pepper, about .05
Can of corn, .07
Onions, .06
Total $4.68

In this account, too, Ruth was liberal in her margins. She did better than this later on. A fairer estimate could have been made at the end of the month and a still fairer even than that, at the end of the year. It sounded almost too good to be true but it was a fact. We had lived, and lived well on this amount and as yet Ruth was inexperienced. She hadn't learned all she learned later. For the benefit of those who may think we went hungry I have asked Ruth to write out the bill of fare for this week as nearly as she can remember it. One thing you must keep in mind is that of everything we had, we

had enough. Neither Ruth, the boy, nor myself ever left the table or dinner pail unsatisfied. Here's what we had and it was better even than it sounds for whatever Ruth made, she made well. I copy it as she wrote it out.

Monday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, griddle-cakes with molasses, cream of tartar biscuits, milk.

Luncheon: for Billy: cold biscuits, two hard-boiled eggs, bowl of rice, cold coffee; for Dick and me: cold biscuits, milk, rice.

Dinner: baked potatoes, griddle-cakes, milk.

Tuesday.

Breakfast: baked potatoes, graham muffins, oatmeal, milk.

Luncheon: for Billy: cold muffins, two hard-boiled eggs, rice, milk; for Dick and me: cold muffins, rice and milk.

Dinner: boiled potatoes, pork scraps, hot biscuits, milk.

Wednesday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, fried potatoes, warmed over biscuits.

Luncheon: for Billy: cold biscuits, two hard-

boiled eggs, bread pudding; for Dick and me: baked potatoes, cold biscuits, bread pudding.

Dinner: beef stew with dumplings, hot biscuits, milk.

Thursday.

Breakfast: fried sausages, baked potatoes, graham muffins, milk.

Luncheon: for Billy: cold muffins, cold sausage and rice; for Dick and me: the same.

Dinner: warmed over stew, lettuce, hot biscuits, milk.

Friday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, fried rock cod, baked potatoes, rye bread, milk.

Luncheon: for Billy: rye bread, potato salad, rice; for Dick and me: the same.

Dinner: soup made from stock of beef, left over fish, boiled potatoes, rice, milk.

Saturday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, fried corn mush with molasses, milk.

Luncheon: for Billy: cold biscuits, two hard-boiled eggs, cheese, rice; for Dick and me: German toast.

Dinner: baked beans, hot biscuits.

Sunday.

Breakfast: baked beans, graham muffins.

Dinner: boiled potatoes, pork scraps, canned corn, corn cake, bread pudding.

A word about that bread pudding. Ruth tells me she puts in an extra quart of milk and then bakes it all day when she bakes her beans, stirring it every now and then. I never knew before how the trick was done but it comes out a rich brown and tastes like plum pudding without the raisins. She says that if you put in raisins it tastes exactly like a plum pudding.

So at the end of the first week I found myself with eighty dollars left over from the old home, one dollar saved in the new, all my bills paid, and Ruth, Dick and myself all fit as a fiddle.

CHAPTER VIII

SUNDAY

That first dollar saved was the germ of a new idea.

It is a further confession of a middle-class mind that in coming down here I had not looked forward beyond the immediate present. With the horror of that last week still on me I had considered only the opportunity I had for earning a livelihood. To be sure I had seen no reason why an intelligent man should not in time be advanced to foreman, and why he should not then be able to save enough to ward off the poorhouse before old age came on. But now—with that first dollar tucked away in the ginger jar—I felt within me the stirring of a new ambition, an ambition born of this quick young country into which I had plunged. Why, in time, should I not become the employer? Why should I not take the initiative in some of these progressive enterprises? Why should I not learn this business

of contracting and building and some day contract and build for myself? With that first dollar saved I was already at heart a capitalist.

I said nothing of this to Ruth. For six months I let the idea grow. If it did nothing else it added zest to my new work. I shoveled as though I were digging for diamonds. It made me a young man again. It made me a young American again. It brought me out of bed every morning with visions; it sent me to sleep at night with dreams.

But I'm running ahead of my story.

I thought I had appreciated Sunday when it meant a release for one day from the office of the United Woollen, but as with all the other things I felt as though it had been but the shadow and that only now had I found the substance. In the first place I had not been able completely to shake the office in the last few years. I brought it home with me and on Sundays it furnished half the subject of conversation. Every little incident, every bit of conversation, every expression on Morse's face was analyzed in the attempt to see what it counted, for or against, the possible future raise. Even when out walking with the boy

the latter was a constant reminder. It was as though he were merely a ward of the United Woollen Company.

But when I put away my shovel at five o'clock on Saturday that was the end of my ditch digging. I came home after that and I was at home until I reported for work on Monday morning. There was neither work nor worry left hanging over. It meant complete relaxation—complete rest. And the body, I found, rests better than the mind.

Later in my work I didn't experience this so perfectly as I now did because then I accepted new responsibilities, but for the first few months I lived in lazy content on this one day. For the most part those who lived around me did all the time. On fair summer days half the population of the little square basked in the sun with eyes half closed from morning until night. Those who didn't, went to the neighboring beaches many of which they could reach for a nickel or visited such public buildings as were open. But wherever they went or whatever they did, they loafed about it. And a man can't truly loaf until he's done a hard week's work which ends with the week.

As for us we had our choice of any num-

ber of pleasant occupations. I insisted that Ruth should make the meals as simple as possible on that day and both the boy and myself helped her about them. We always washed the dishes and swept the floor. First of all there was the roof. I early saw the possibility of this much neglected spot. It was flat and had a fence around it for it was meant to be used for the hanging out of clothes. Being a new building it had been built a story higher than its older neighbors so that we overlooked the other roofs. There was a generous space through which we saw the harbor. I picked up a strip of old canvas for a trifle in one of the shore-front junk-shops which deal in second-hand ship supplies and arranged it over one corner like a canopy. Then I brought home with me some bits of board that were left over from the wood construction at the ditch and nailed these together to make a rude sort of window box. It was harder to get dirt than it was wood but little by little I brought home enough finally to fill the boxes. In these we planted radishes and lettuce and a few flower seeds. We had almost as good a garden as we used to have in our back yard. At any rate it

was just as much fun to watch the things grow, and though the lettuce never amounted to much we actually raised some very good radishes. The flowers did well, too.

We brought up an old blanket and spread it out beneath the canopy and that, with a chair or two, made our roof garden. A local branch of the Public Library was not far distant so that we had all the reading matter we wanted and here we used to sit all day Sunday when we didn't feel like doing anything else. Here, too, we used to sit evenings. On several hot nights Ruth, the boy and I brought up our blankets and slept out. The boy liked it so well that finally he came to sleep up here most of the summer. It was fine for him. The harbor breeze swept the air clean of smoke so that it was as good for him as being at the sea-shore.

To us the sights from this roof were marvelous. They appealed strongly because they were unlike anything we had ever seen or for that matter unlike anything our friends had ever seen. I think that a man's friends often take away the freshness from sights that otherwise might move him. I've never been to Europe but what with magazine pictures and

snap shots and Mrs. Grover, who never forgot that before she married Grover she had travelled for a whole year, I haven't any special desire to visit London or Paris. I suppose it would be different if I ever went but even then I don't think there would be the novelty to it we found from our roof. And it was just that novelty and the ability to appreciate it that made our whole emigrant life possible. It was for us the Great Adventure again. I suppose there are men who will growl that it's all bosh to say there is any real romance in living in four rooms in a tenement district, eating what we ate, digging in a ditch and mooning over a view from a roof top. I want to say right here that for such men there wouldn't be any romance or beauty in such a life. They'd be miserable. There are plenty of men living down there now and they never miss a chance to air their opinions. Some of them have big bodies but I wouldn't give them fifty cents a day to work for me. Luckily however, there are not many of them in proportion to the others, even though they make more noise.

But when you stop to think about it what else is it but romance that leads men to spend their

lives fishing off the Banks when they could remain safely ashore and get better pay driving a team? Or what drives them into the army or to work on railroads when they neither expect nor hope to be advanced? The men themselves can't tell you. They take up the work unthinkingly but there is something in the very hardships they suffer which lends a sting to the life and holds them. The only thing I know of that will do this and turn the grind into an inspiration is romance. It's what the new-comers have and it's what our ancestors had and it's what a lot of us who have stayed over here too long out of the current have lost.

On the lazy summer mornings we could hear the church bells and now and then a set of chimes. Because we were above the street and next to the sky they sounded as drowsily musical as in a country village. They made me a bit conscience-stricken to think that for the boy's sake I didn't make an effort and go to some church. But for a while it was church enough to devote the seventh day to what the Bible says it was made for. Ruth used to read out loud to us and we planned to

make our book suit the day after a fashion. Sometimes it was Emerson, sometimes Tennyson—I was very fond of the Idylls—and sometimes a book of sermons. Later on we had a call from a young minister who had a little mission chapel not far from our flat and who looked in upon us at the suggestion of the secretary of the settlement house. We went to a service at his chapel one Sunday and before we ourselves realized it we were attending regularly with a zest and interest which we had never felt in our suburban church-going. Later still we each of us found a share in the work ourselves and came to have a great satisfaction and contentment in it. But I am running ahead of my story.

We'd have dinner this first summer at about half past one and then perhaps we'd go for a walk. There wasn't a street in the city that didn't interest us but as a rule we'd plan to visit one of the parks. I didn't know there were so many of them or that they were so different. We had our choice of the ocean or a river or the woods. If we had wished to spend say thirty cents in car fare we could have had a further choice of the

beach, the mountains, or a taste of the country which in places had not changed in the last hundred years. This would have given us a two hours' ride. Occasionally we did this but at present there was too much to see within walking distance.

For one thing it suddenly occurred to me that though I had lived in this city over thirty years I had not yet seen such places of interest as always attracted visitors from out of town. My attention was brought to this first by the need of limiting ourselves to amusements that didn't cost anything, but chiefly by learning where the better element down here spent their Sundays. You have only to follow this crowd to find out where the objects of national pride are located. An old battle flag will attract twenty foreigners to one American. And incidentally I wish to confess it was they who made me ashamed of my ignorance of the country's history. Beyond a memory of the Revolution, the Civil War and a few names of men and battles connected therewith, I'd forgotten all I ever learned at school on this subject. But here the many patriotic celebrations arranged by the local schools in the endeavor to instill patriotism and

the frequent visits of the boys to the museums, kept the subject fresh. Not only Dick but Ruth and myself soon turned to it as a vital part of our education. Inspired by the old trophies that ought to stand for so much to us of to-day we took from the library the first volume of Fiske's fine series and in the course of time read them all. As we traced the fortunes of those early adventurers who dreamed and sailed towards an unknown continent, pictured to ourselves the lives of the tribes who wandered about in the big tangle of forest growth between the Atlantic and the Pacific, as we landed on the bleak New England shores with the early Pilgrims, then fought with Washington, then studied the perilous internal struggle culminating with Lincoln and the Civil War, then the dangerous period of reconstruction with the breathless progress following—why it left us all better Americans than we had ever been in our lives. It gave new meaning to my present surroundings and helped me better to understand the newcomers. Somehow all those things of the past didn't seem to concern Grover and the rest of them in the trim little houses. They had no history and they were a part of no history.

Perhaps that's because they were making no history themselves. As for myself, I know that I was just beginning to get acquainted with my ancestors—that for the first time in my life, I was really conscious of being a citizen of the United States of America.

But I soon discovered that not only the historic but the beautiful attracted these people. They introduced me to the Art Museum. In the winter following our first summer here, when the out of door attractions were considerably narrowed down, Ruth and I used to go there about every other Sunday with the boy. We came to feel as familiar with our favorite pictures as though they hung in our own house. The Museum ceased to be a public building; it was our own. We went in with a nod to the old doorkeeper who came to know us and felt as unconstrained there as at home. We had our favorite nooks, our favorite seats and we lounged about in the soft lights of the rooms for hours at a time. The more we looked at the beautiful paintings, the old tapestries, the treasures of stone and china, the more we enjoyed them. We were sure to meet some of our neighbors there and a young artist who lived on the sec-

ond floor of our house and whom later I came to know very well, pointed out to us new beauties in the old masters. He was selling plaster casts at that time and studying art in the night school.

In the old life, an art museum had meant nothing to me more than that it seemed a necessary institution in every city. It was a mark of good breeding in a town, like the library in a good many homes. But it had never occurred to me to visit it and I know it hadn't to any of my former associates. The women occasionally went to a special exhibition that was likely to be discussed at the little dinners, but a week later they couldn't have told you what they had seen. Perhaps our neighborhood was the exception and a bit more ignorant than the average about such things, but I'll venture to say there isn't a middle-class community in this country where the paintings play the part in the lives of the people that they do among the foreign-born. A class better than they does the work; a class lower enjoys it. Where the middle-class comes in, I don't know.

After being gone all the afternoon we'd be glad to get home again and maybe we'd have a lunch of cold beans and biscuits or some of

the pudding that was left over. Then during the summer months we'd go back to the roof for a restful evening. At night the view was as different from the day as you could imagine. Behind us the city proper was in a bluish haze made by the electric lights. Then we could see the yellow lights of the upper windows in all the neighboring houses and beyond these, over the roof tops which seemed now to huddle closer together, we saw the passing red and green lights of moving vessels. Overhead were the same clean stars which were at the same time shining down upon the woods and the mountain tops. There was something about it that made me feel a man and a free man. There was twenty years of slavery back of me to make me appreciate this.

And Ruth reading my thoughts in my eyes used to nestle closer to me and the boy with his chin in his hands would stare out at sea and dream his own dreams.

CHAPTER IX

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

As I said, with that first dollar in the ginger jar representing the first actual saving I had ever effected in my whole life, my imagination became fired with new plans. I saw no reason why I myself should not become an employer. As in the next few weeks I enlarged my circle of acquaintances and pushed my inquiries in every possible direction I found this idea was in the air down here. The ambition of all these people was towards complete independence. Either they hoped to set up in business for themselves in this country or they looked forward to saving enough to return to the land of their birth and live there as small land owners. I speak more especially of the Italians because just now I was thrown more in contact with them than the others. In my city they, with the Irish, seemed peculiarly of real emigrant stuff. The Jews were so clannish that they were a

problem in themselves; the Germans assimilated a little better and yet they too were like one large family. They did not get into the city life very much and even in their business stuck pretty closely to one line. For a good many years they remained essentially Germans. But the Irish were citizens from the time they landed and the Italians eventually became such if by a slower process.

The former went into everything. They are a tremendously adaptable people. But whatever they tackled they looked forward to independence and generally won it. Even a man of so humble an ambition as Murphy had accomplished this. The Italians either went into the fruit business for which they seem to have a knack or served as day laborers and saved. There was a man down here who was always ready to stake them to a cart and a supply of fruit, at an exorbitant price to be sure, but they pushed their carts patiently mile upon mile until in the end they saved enough to buy one of their own. The next step was a small fruit store. The laborers, once they had acquired a working capital, took up many things—a lot of them going into the country and buying de-

serted farms. It was wonderful what they did with this land upon which the old stock New Englander had not been able to live. But of course in part explanation of this, you must remember that these New England villages have long been drained of their best. In many cases only the maim, the halt, and the blind are left and these stand no more chance against the modern pioneer than they would against one of their own sturdy forefathers.

Another occupation which the Italians seemed to preëmpt was the boot-blacking business. It may seem odd to dignify so menial an employment as a business but there is many a head of such an establishment who could show a fatter bank account than two-thirds of his clients. The next time you go into a little nook containing say fifteen chairs, figure out for yourself how many nickels are left there in a day. The rent is often high—it is some proof of a business worth thought when you consider that they are able to pay for positions on the leading business streets—but the labor is cheap and the furnishings and cost of raw material slight. Pasquale had set me to thinking long before, when I learned that he was earning almost as much a week as

I. It is no unusual thing for a man who owns his "emporium" to draw ten dollars a day in profits and not show himself until he empties the cash register at night.

But the fact that impressed me in these people—and this holds peculiarly true of the Jews—was that they all shied away from the salaried jobs. In making such generalizations I may be running a risk because I'm only giving the results of my own limited observation and experience. But I want it understood that from the beginning to the end of these recollections I'm trying to do nothing more. I'm not a student. I'm not a sociologist. The conditions which I observed may not hold elsewhere for all I know. From a different point of view, they might not to another seem to hold even in my own city. I won't argue with anyone about it. I set down what I myself saw and let it go at that.

Going back to the small group among whom I lived when I was with the United Woollen, it seems to me that every man clung to a salary as though it were his only possible hope. I know men among them who even refused to work on a commission basis although they were practically sure of earning in this

way double what they were being paid by the year. They considered a salary as a form of insurance and once in the grip of this idea they had nothing to look forward to except an increase. I was no better myself. I didn't really expect to be head of the firm. Nor did the other men. We weren't working and holding on with any notion of winning independence along that line. The most we hoped for was a bigger salary. Some men didn't anticipate more than twenty-five hundred like me, and others—the younger men—talked about five thousand and even ten thousand. I didn't hear them discuss what they were going to do when they were general managers or vice-presidents but always what they could enjoy when they drew the larger annuity. And save those who saw in professional work a way out, this was the career they were choosing for their sons. They wanted to get them into banks and the big companies where the assurance of lazy routine advancement up to a certain point was the reward for industry, sobriety and honesty. A salary with an old, strongly established company semed to them about as big a stroke of luck for a young man as a legacy. I myself had hoped to find a

place for Dick with one of the big trust companies.

Of course down here these people did not have the same opportunities. Most of the old firms preferred the "bright young American" and I guess they secured most of them. I pity the "bright young American" but I can't help congratulating the bright young Italians and the bright young Irishmen. They are forced as a result to make business for themselves and they are given every opportunity in the world for doing it. And they *are* doing it. And I, breathing in this atmosphere, made up my mind that I would do it, too.

With this in mind I outlined for myself a systematic course of procedure. It was evident that in this as in any other business I must master thoroughly the details before taking up the larger problems. The details of this as of any other business lay at the bottom and so for these at least I was at present in the best possible position. The two most important factors to the success of a contractor seemed to me to be, roughly speaking, the securing and handling of men and the purchase and use of materials. Of the two, the former appeared to be the more important. Even

in the few weeks I had been at work here I had observed a big difference in the amount of labor accomplished by different men individually. I could have picked out a half dozen that were worth more than all the others put together. And in the two foremen I had noticed another big difference in the varying capacity of a boss to get work out of the men collectively. In work where labor counted for so much in the final cost as here, it appeared as though this involved almost the whole question of profit and loss. With a hundred men employed at a dollar and a half a day, the saving of a single hour meant the saving of a good many dollars.

It may seem odd that so obvious a fact was not taken advantage of by the present contractors. Doubtless it was realized but my later experience showed me that the obvious is very often neglected. In this business as in many others, the details fall into a rut and often a newcomer with a fresh point of view will detect waste that has been going on unnoticed for years. I was almost forty years old, fairly intelligent, and I had everything at stake. So I was distinctly more alert than those who retained their positions merely by letting things

run along as well as they always had been going. But however you may explain it, I knew that the foreman didn't get as much work out of me as he might have done. In spite of all the control I exercised over myself I often quit work realizing that half my strength during the day had gone for nothing. And though it may sound like boasting to say it, I think I worked both more conscientiously and intelligently than most of the men.

In the first place the foreman was a bully. He believed in driving his men. He swore at them and goaded them as an ignorant countryman often tries to drive oxen. The result was a good deal the same as it is with oxen—the men worked excitedly when under the sting and loafed the rest of the time. In a crisis the boss was able to spur them on to their best—though even then they wasted strength in frantic endeavor—but he could not keep them up to a consistent level of steady work. And that's what counts. As in a Marathon race the men who maintain a steady plugging pace from start to finish are the ones who accomplish.

The question may be asked how such a boss could keep his job. I myself did not under-

stand that at first but later as I worked with different men and under different bosses I saw that it was because their methods were much alike and that the results were much alike. A certain standard had been established as to the amount of work that should be done by a hundred men and this was maintained. The boss had figured out loosely how much the men would work and the men had figured out to a minute how much they could loaf. Neither man nor boss took any special interest in the work itself. The men were allowed to waste just so much time in getting water, in filling their pipes, in spitting on their hands, in resting on their shovels, in lazy chatter, and so long as they did not exceed this nothing was said.

The trouble was that the standard was low and this was because the men had nothing to gain by steady conscientious work and also because the boss did not understand them nor distinguish between them. For instance the foreman ought to have got the work of two men out of me but he wouldn't have, if I hadn't chosen to give it. That held true also of Rafferty and one or two others.

Now my idea was this: that if a man made a

study of these men who, in this city at any rate, were the key to the contractor's problem, and learned their little peculiarities, their standards of justice, their ambitions, their weakness and their strength, he ought to be able to increase their working capacity. Certainly an intelligent teamster does this with horses and it seemed as though it ought to be possible to accomplish still finer results with men. To go a little farther in my ambition, it also seemed possible to pick and select the best of these men instead of taking them at random. For instance in the present gang there were at least a half dozen who stood out as more intelligent and stronger physically than all the others. Why couldn't a man in time gather about him say a hundred such men and by better treatment, possibly better pay, possibly a guarantee of continuous work, make of them a loyal, hard working machine with a capacity for double the work of the ordinary gang? Such organization as this was going on in other lines of business, why not in this? With such a machine at his command, a man ought to make himself a formidable competitor with even the long established firms.

At any rate this was my theory and it gave

a fresh inspiration to my work. Whether anything came of it or not it was something to hope for, something to toil for, something which raised this digging to the plane of the pioneer who joyfully clears his field of stumps and rocks. It swung me from the present into the future. It was a different future from that which had weighed me down when with the United Woollen. This was no waiting game. Neither your pioneer nor your true emigrant sits down and waits. Here was something which depended solely upon my own efforts for its success or failure. And I knew that it wasn't possible to fail so dismally but what the joy of the struggle would always be mine.

In the meanwhile I carried with me to my work a note book and during the noon hour I set down everything which I thought might be of any possible use to me. I missed no opportunity for learning even the most trivial details. A great deal of the information was superficial and a great deal of it was incorrect but down it went in the note book to be revised later when I became better informed.

I watched my fellow workmen as much as

possible and plied them with questions. I wanted to know where the cement came from and in what proportion it was mixed with sand and gravel and stone for different work. I wanted to know where the sand and gravel and stone came from and how it was graded. Wherever it was possible I secured rough prices for different materials. I wanted to know where the lumber was bought and I wanted to know how the staging was built and why it was built. Understand that I did not flatter myself that I was fast becoming a mason, a carpenter, an engineer and a contractor all in one and all at once. I knew that the most of my information was vague and loose. Half the men who were doing the work didn't know why they were doing it and a lot of them didn't know how they were doing it. They worked by instinct and habit. Then, too, they were a clannish lot and a jealous lot. They resented my questioning however delicately I might do it and often refused to answer me. But in spite of this I found myself surprised later with the fund of really valuable knowledge I acquired.

In addition to this I acquired *sources* of information. I found out where to go for the

real facts. I learned for instance who for this particular job was supplying for the contractor his cement and gravel and crushed stone—though as it happened this contractor himself either owned or controlled his own plant for the production of most of his material. However I learned something when I learned that. For a man who had apparently been in business all his life, I was densely ignorant of even the fundamentals of business. This idea of running the business back to the sources of the raw material was a new idea to me. I had not thought of the contractor as owning his own quarries and gravel pits, obvious as the advantage was. I wanted to know where the tools were bought and how much they cost—from the engines and hoisting cranes and carrying system down to pick-axes, crowbars and shovels. I made a note of the fact that many of the smaller implements were not cared for properly and even tried to estimate how with proper attention the life of a pick-axe could be prolonged. I joyed particularly in every such opportunity as this no matter how trivial it appeared later. It was just such details as these which gave reality to my dream.

I figured out how many cubic feet of earth

per day per man was being handled here and how this varied under different bosses. I pried and listened and questioned and figured even when digging. I worked with my eyes and ears wide open. It was wonderful how quickly in this way the hours flew. A day now didn't seem more than four hours long. Many the time I've felt actually sorry when the signal to quit work was given at night and have hung around for half an hour while the engineer fixed his boiler for the night and the old man lighted his lanterns to string along the excavation. I don't know what they all thought of me, but I know some of them set me down for a college man doing the work for experience. This to say the least was flattering to my years.

As I say, a lot of this work was wasted energy in the sense that I acquired anything worth while, but none of it was wasted when I recall the joy of it. If I had actually been a college boy in the first flush of youthful enthusiasm I could not have gone at my work more enthusiastically or dreamed wilder or bigger dreams. Even after many of these bubbles were pricked and had vanished, the mood which made them did not vanish. I have never

forgotten and never can forget the sheer delight of those months. I was eighteen again with a lot besides that I didn't have at eighteen.

My work along another line was more practical and more successful. What I learned about the men and the best way to handle them was genuine capital. In the first place I lost no opportunity to make myself as solid as possible with Dan Rafferty. This was not altogether from a purely selfish motive either. I liked the man. In a way I think he was the most lovable man I ever met, although that seems a lady-like term to apply to so rugged a fellow. But below his beef and brawn, below his aggressiveness, below his coarseness, below even a peculiar moral bluntness about a good many things, there was a strain of something fine about Dan Rafferty. I had a glimpse of it when he preferred going back to the sewer gas rather than let a man like the old foreman force him into a position where the latter could fire him. But that was only one side of him. He had a heart as big as a woman's and one as keen to respond to sympathy. This in its turn inspired in others a feeling towards him that to save my life I can only describe as love

—love in its big sense. He'd swear like a pirate at the Dagoes and they'd only grin back at him where'd they'd feel like knifing any other man. And when Dan learned that Anton' had lost his boy he sent down to the house a wreath of flowers half as big as a cart wheel. There was scarcely a day when some old lady didn't manage to see Dan at the noon hour and draw him aside with a mumbled plea that always made him dig into his pockets. He caught me watching him one day and said in explanation, "She's me grandmither."

After I'd seen at least a dozen different ones approach him I asked him if they were all his grandmothers.

"Sure," he said. "Ivery ould woman in the ward is me grandmither."

Those same grandmothers stood him in good stead later in his life, for every single grandmother had some forty grandchildren and half of these had votes. But Dan wasn't looking that far ahead then. Two facts rather distinguished him at the start; he didn't either drink or smoke. He didn't have any opinions upon the subject but he was one of the rare Irishmen born that way. Now and then you'll find one and as likely as not he'll prove one of

the good fellows you'd expect to see in the other crowd. However, beyond exciting my interest and leading me to score him some fifty points in my estimate of him as a good workman, I was indifferent to this side of his character. The thing that impressed me most was a quality of leadership he seemed to possess. There was nothing masterful about it. You didn't look to see him lead in any especially good or great cause, but you could see readily enough that whatever cause he chose, it would be possible for him to gather about him a large personal following. I was attracted to this side of him in considering him as having about all the good raw material for a great boss. Put twenty men on a rope with Dan at the head of them and just let him say, "Now, biys—altogither," and you'd see every man's neck grow taut with the strain. I know because I've been one of the twenty and felt as though I wanted to drag every muscle out of my body. And when it was over I'd ask myself why in the devil I pulled that way. When I told myself that it was because I was pulling with Dan Rafferty I said all I knew about it.

It seemed to me that any man who secured

Dan as a boss would already have the backbone of his gang. I didn't ever expect to use him in this way but I wanted the man for a friend and I wanted to learn the secret of his power if I could. But I may as well confess right now that I never fully fathomed that.

In the meanwhile I had not neglected the other men. At every opportunity I talked with them. At the beginning I made it a point to learn their names and addresses which I jotted down in my book. I learned something from them of the padrone system and the unfair contracts into which they were trapped. I learned their likes and dislikes, their ambitions, and as much as possible about their families. It all came hard at first but little by little as I worked with them I found them trusting me more with their confidences.

In this way then the first summer passed. Both Ruth and the boy in the meanwhile were just as busy about their respective tasks as I was. The latter took to the gymnasium work like a duck to water and in his enthusiasm for this tackled his lessons with renewed interest. He put on five pounds of weight and what with the daily ocean swim which we both enjoyed, his cheeks took on color and he became as

brown as an Indian. If he had passed the summer at the White Mountains he could not have looked any hardier. He made many friends at the Y. M. C. A. They were all ambitious boys and they woke him up wonderfully. I was careful to follow him closely in this new life and made it a point to see the boys myself and to make him tell me at the end of each day just what he had been about. Dick was a boy I could trust to tell me every detail. He was absolutely truthful and he wasn't afraid to open his heart to me with whatever new questions might be bothering him. As far as possible I tried to point out to him what to me seemed the good points in his new friends and to warn him against any little weaknesses among them which from time to time I might detect. Ruth did the rest. A father, however much a comrade he may be with his boy, can go only so far. There is always plenty left which belongs to the mother—if she is such a mother as Ruth.

As for Ruth herself I watched her anxiously in fear lest the new life might wear her down but honestly as far as the house was concerned she didn't seem to have as much to bother her as she had before. She was slowly getting

the buying and the cooking down to a science. Many a week now our food bill went as low as a little over three dollars. We bought in larger quantities and this always effected a saving. We bought a barrel of flour and half a barrel of sugar for one thing. Then as the new potatoes came into the market we bought half a barrel of those and half a barrel of apples. She did wonders with those apples and they added a big variety to our menus. Another saving was effected by buying suet which cost but a few cents a pound, trying this out and mixing it with the lard for shortening. As the weather became cooler we had baked beans twice a week instead of once. These made for us four and sometimes five or six meals. We figured out that we could bake a quart pot of beans, using half a pound of pork to a pot, for less than twenty cents. This gave the three of us two meals with some left over for lunch, making the cost per man about three cents. And they made a hearty meal, too. That was a trick she had learned in the country where baked beans are a staple article of diet. I liked them cold for my lunch.

As for clothes neither Ruth nor myself needed much more than we had. I bought

nothing but one pair of heavy boots which Ruth picked up at a bankrupt sale for two dollars. On herself she didn't spend a cent. She brought down here with her a winter and a summer street suit, several house dresses and three or four petticoats and a goodly supply of under things. She knew how to care for them and they lasted her. I brought down, in addition to my business suit, a Sunday suit of blue serge and a dress suit and a Prince Albert. I sold the last two to a second hand dealer for eleven dollars and this helped towards the boy's outfit in the fall. She bought for him a pair of three dollar shoes for a dollar and a half at this same "Sold Out" sale, a dollar's worth of stockings and about a dollar's worth of underclothes. He had a winter overcoat and hat, though I could have picked up these in either a pawnshop or second hand store for a couple of dollars. It was wonderful what you could get at these places, especially if anyone had the knack which Ruth had of making over things.

CHAPTER X

THE EMIGRANT SPIRIT

That fall the boy passed his entrance examinations and entered the finest school in the state—the city high school. If he had been worth a million he couldn't have had better advantages. I was told that the graduates of this school entered college with a higher average than the graduates of most of the big preparatory schools. Certainly they had just as good instruction and if anything better discipline. There was more competition here and a real competition. Many of the pupils were foreign born and a much larger per cent of them children of foreign born. Their parents had been over here long enough to realize what an advantage an education was and the children went at their work with the feeling that their future depended upon their application here.

The boy's associates might have been more carefully selected at some fashionable school

but I was already beginning to realize that selected associates aren't always select associates and that even if they are this is more of a disadvantage than an advantage. The fact that the boy's fellows were all of a kind was what had disturbed me even in the little suburban grammar school. For that matter I can see now that even for Ruth and me this sameness was a handicap for both us and our neighbors. There was no clash. There was a dead level. I don't believe that's good for either boys or men or for women.

Supposing this open door policy did admit a few worthless youngsters into the school and supposing again that the private school didn't admit such of a different order (which I very much doubt)—along with these Dick was going to find here the men—the past had proved this and the present was proving it—who eventually would become our statesmen, our progressive business men, our lawyers and doctors—if not our conservative bankers. For one graduate of such a school as my former surroundings had made me think essential for the boy, I could count now a dozen graduates of this very high school who were distinguishing themselves in the city. The

boy was going to meet here the same spirit I was getting in touch with among my emigrant friends—a zeal for life, a belief in the possibilities of life, an optimistic determination to use these possibilities, which somehow the blue-blooded Americans were losing. It seemed to me that life was getting stale for the fourth and fifth generation. I tried to make the boy see this point of view. I went back again with him to the pioneer idea.

"Dick," I said in substance, "your great-great-grandfather pulled up stakes and came over to this country when there was nothing here but trees, rocks and Indians. It was a hard fight but a good fight and he left a son to carry on the fight. So generation after generation they fought but somehow they grew a bit weaker as they fought. "Now," I said, "you and I are going to try to recover that lost ground. Let's think of ourselves as like our great-great-grandfathers. We've just come over here. So have about a million others. The fight is a different fight to-day but it's no less a fight and we're going to win. We have a good many advantages that these newcomers haven't. You see them making good on every side of you but I'll bet they can't lick a

good American—when he isn't asleep. You and I are going to make good too."

"You bet we are, Dad," he said, with his eyes grown bright.

"Then," I said, "you must work the way the newcomers work. I don't want you to think you're any better than they are. You aren't. But you're just as good and these two hundred years we've lived here ought to count for something."

The boy lifted his head at this.

"You make me feel as though we'd just landed with the Pilgrims," he said.

"So we have," I said. "June seventh of this very year we landed on Plymouth Rock just as our ancestors did two centuries ago. They've been all this time paving the way for you and me. They've built roads and schools and factories and it's up to us now to use them. You and I have just landed from England. Let's see what we can do as pioneers."

I wanted to get at the young American in him. I wanted him to realize that he was something more than the son of his parents; something more than just an average English-speaking boy. I wanted him to feel the impetus of the big history back of him and the

big history yet to be made ahead of him. He had known nothing of that before. The word American had no meaning to him except when a regiment of soldiers was marching by. I wanted him to feel all the time as he did when his throat grew lumpy with the band playing and the stars and stripes flying on Fourth of July or Decoration Day.

I urged him to study hard as the first essential towards success but I also told him to get into the school life. I didn't want him to stand back as his tendency was and watch the other fellows. I didn't want him to sit in the bleachers—at least not until he had proved that this was the place for him. Even then I wanted him to lead the cheering. I wanted him to test himself in the literary societies, the dramatic clubs, on the athletic field. In other words, instead of remaining passive I wanted him to take an aggressive attitude towards life. In still other words instead of being a middle-classer I wanted him to get something of the emigrant spirit. And I had the satisfaction of seeing him begin his work with the germ of that idea in his brain.

In the meanwhile with the approach of cold weather I saw a new item of expense loom up

in the form of coal. We had used kerosene all summer but now it became necessary for the sake of heat to get a stove. For a week I took what time I could spare and wandered around among the junk shops looking for a second hand stove and finally found just what I wanted. I paid three dollars for it and it cost me another dollar to have some small repairs made. I set it up myself in the living room which we decided to use as a kitchen for the winter. But when I came to look into the matter of getting coal down here I found I was facing a pretty serious problem. Coal had been a big item in the suburbs but the way people around me were buying it, made it a still bigger one. No cellar accommodations came with the tenement and so each one was forced to buy his coal by the basket or bag. A basket of anthracite was costing them at this time about forty cents. This was for about eighty pounds of coal, which made the total cost per ton eleven dollars—at least three dollars and a half over the regular price. Even with economy a person would use at least a bag a week. This, to leave a liberal margin, would amount to about a ton and a half of coal during the winter months. I didn't like

the idea of absorbing the half dollar or so a week that Ruth was squeezing out towards what few clothes we had to buy, in this way—at least the over-charge part of it. With the first basket I brought home, I said, "I see where you'll have to dig down into the ginger jar this winter, little woman."

She looked as startled as though I had told her someone had stolen the savings.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

I pointed to the basket.

"Coal costs about eleven dollars a ton, down here."

When she found out that this was all that caused my remark, she didn't seem to be disturbed.

"Billy," she said, "before we touch the ginger jar it will have to cost twenty dollars a ton. We'll live on pea soup and rice three times a day before I touch that."

"All right," I said, "but it does seem a pity that the burden of such prices as these should fall on the poor."

"Why do they?" she asked.

"Because in this case," I said, "the dealers seem to have us where the wool is short."

"How have they?" she insisted.

"We can't buy coal by the ton because we haven't any place to put it." She thought a moment and then she said:

"We could take care of a fifth of a ton, Billy. That's only five baskets."

"They won't sell five any cheaper than one."

"And every family in this house could take care of five," she went on. "That would make a ton."

I began to see what she meant and as I thought of it I didn't see why it wasn't a practical scheme.

"I believe that's a good idea," I said. "And if there were more women like you in the world I don't believe there'd be any trusts at all."

"Nonsense," she said. "You leave it to me now and I'll see the other women in the house. They are the ones who'll appreciate a good saving like that."

She saw them and after a good deal of talk they agreed, so I told Ruth to tell them to save out of next Saturday night's pay a dollar and a half apiece. I was a bit afraid that if I didn't get the cash when the coal was delivered I might get stuck on the deal. The next Monday I ordered the coal and asked to have it delivered late in the day. When I came home

I found the wagon waiting and it created about as much excitement on the street as an ambulance. I guess it was the first time in the history of Little Italy that a coal team had ever stopped before a tenement. The driver had brought baskets with him and I filled up one and took it to a store nearby and weighed into it eighty pounds of coal. With that for my guide I gathered the other men of the families about me and made them carry the coal in while I measured it out. The driver who at first was inclined to object to the whole proceeding was content to let things go on when he found himself relieved of all the carrying. We emptied the wagon in no time and the other men insisted upon carrying up my coal for me. I collected every cent of my money and incidentally established myself on a firm footing with every family in the house. Several other tenements later adopted the plan but the idea didn't take hold the way you'd have thought it would. I guess it was because there weren't any more Ruths around there to oversee the job. Then, too, while these people are far-sighted in a good many ways, they are short-sighted in others. Neither the wholesale nor co-operative plans

appeal to them. For one thing they are suspicious and for another they don't like to spend any more than they have to day by day. Later on through Ruth's influence we carried our scheme a little farther with just the people in the house and bought flour and sugar that way but it was made possible only through their absolute trust in her. We always insisted on carrying out every such little operation on a cash basis and they never failed us.

Ruth's influence had been gradually spreading through the neighborhood. She had found time to meet the other families in the house and through them had met a dozen more. The first floor was occupied by Michele, an Italian laborer, his wife, his wife's sister and two children. On the second floor there was Giuseppe, the young sculptor, and his father and mother. The father was an invalid and the lad supported the three. On the third floor lived a fruit peddler, his wife and his wife's mother—rather a commonplace family, while the fourth floor was occupied by Pietro, a young fellow who sold cut flowers on the street and hoped some day to have a garden of his own. He had two children and a grandmother to care for.

It certainly afforded a contrast to visit those other flats and then Ruth's. Right here is where her superior intelligence came in, of course. The foreign-born women do not so quickly adapt themselves to the standards of this country as the men do. Most of them as I learned, come from the country districts of Italy where they live very rudely. Once here they make their new quarters little better than their old. The younger ones however who are going to school are doing better. But taken by and large it was difficult to persuade them that cleanliness offered any especial advantages. It wasn't as though they minded the dirt and were chained to it by circumstances from which they couldn't escape—as I used to think. They simply didn't object to it. So long as they were warm and had food enough they were content. They didn't suffer in any way that they themselves could see.

But when Ruth first went into their quarters she was horrified. She thought that at length she was face to face with all the misery and squalor of the slums of which she had read. I remember her chalk-white face as she met me at the door upon my return home one night. She nearly drove the color out of my own

cheeks for I thought surely that something had happened to the boy. But it wasn't that; she had heard that the baby on the first floor was ill and had gone down there to see if there was anything she might do for it. Until then she had seen nothing but the outside of the other doors from the hall and they looked no different from our own. But once inside—well I guess that's where the two hundred years if not the four hundred years back of us native Americans counts.

"Why, Billy," she cried, "it was awful. I'll never get that picture out of mind if I live to be a hundred."

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Why the poor little thing—"

"What poor little thing?" I interrupted.

"Michele's baby. It lay there in dirty rags with its pinched white face staring up at me as though just begging for a clean bed."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Matter with it? It's a wonder it isn't dead and buried. The district nurse came in while I was there and told me,"—she shuddered—"that they'd been feeding it on macaroni cooked in greasy gravy. And it isn't six months old yet."

"No wonder it looked white," I said, remembering how we had discussed for a week the wisdom of giving Dick the coddled white of an egg at that age.

"Why the conditions down there are terrible," cried Ruth. "Michele must be very, very poor. The floor wasn't washed, you couldn't see out of the windows, and the clothes—"

She held up her hands unable to find words.

"That *does* sound bad," I said.

"It's criminal. Billy—we can't allow a family in the same house with us to suffer like that, can we?"

I shook my head.

"Then go down and see what you can do. I guess we can squeeze out fifty cents for them, can't we, Billy?"

"I guess you could squeeze fifty cents out of a stone for a sick baby," I said.

The upshot of it was that I went down and saw Michele. As Ruth had said his quarters were anything but clean but they didn't impress me as being in so bad a condition as she had described them. Perhaps my work in the ditch had made me a little more used to dirt. I found Michele a healthy, temperate, able-bodied man and I learned that he was earning

as much as I. Not only that but the women took in garments to finish and picked up the matter of two or three dollars a week extra. There were five in the family but they were far from being in want. In fact Michele had a good bank account. They had all they wanted to eat, were warm and really prosperous. There was absolutely no need of the dirt. It was there because they didn't mind it. A five cent cake of soap would have made the rooms clean as a whistle and there were two women to do the scrubbing. I didn't leave my fifty cents but I came back upstairs with a better appreciation, if that were possible, of what such a woman as Ruth means to a man. Even the baby began to get better as soon as the district nurse drove into the parent's head a few facts about sensible infant feeding.

I don't want to make out that life is all beer and skittles for the tenement dwellers. It isn't. But I ran across any number of such cases as this where conditions were not nearly so bad as they appeared on the surface. Taking into account the number of people who were gathered together here in a small area I didn't see among the temperate and able-bodied any worse examples of hard luck than

I saw among my former associates. In fact of sheer abstract hard luck I didn't see as much. In seventy-five per cent of the cases the conditions were of their own making—either the man was a drunkard or the women slovenly or the whole family was just naturally vicious. Ignorance may excuse some of this but not all of it. Perhaps I'm not what you'd call sympathetic but I've heard a lot of men talk about these people in a way that sounds to me like twaddle. I never ran across a family down here in such misery as that which Steve Bonnington's wife endured for years without a whimper.

Bonnington was a clerk with a big insurance company. He lived four houses below us on our street. I suppose he was earning about eighteen hundred dollars a year when he died. He left five children and he never had money enough even to insure in his own company. He didn't leave a cent. When Helen Bonnington came back from the grave it was to face the problem of supporting unaided, either by experience or relatives, five children ranging from twelve to one. She was a shy, retiring little body who had sapped her strength in just bringing the children into

the world and caring for them in the privacy of her home. She had neither the temperament nor the training to face the world. But she bucked up to it. She sold out of the house what things she could spare, secured cheap rooms on the outskirts of the neighborhood and announced that she would do sewing. What it cost her to come back among her old friends and do that is a particularly choice type of agony that it would be impossible for a tenement widow to appreciate. And this same self-respect which both Helen's education and her environment forced her to maintain, handicapped her in other ways. You couldn't give Mrs. Bonnington scraps from your table; you couldn't give her old clothes or old shoes or money. It wasn't her fault because this was so; it wasn't your fault.

When her children were sick she couldn't send them off to the public wards of the hospitals. In the first place half the hospitals wouldn't take them as charity patients simply because she maintained a certain dignity, and in the second place the idea, by education, was so repugnant to her that it never entered her head to try. So she stayed at home and

sewed from daylight until she couldn't hold open her eyes at night. That's where you get your true "Song of the Shirt." She not only sewed her fingers to the bone but while doing it she suffered a very fine kind of torture wondering what would happen to the five if she broke down. Asylums and homes and hospitals don't imply any great disgrace to most of the tenement dwellers but to a woman of that type they mean Hell. God knows how she did it but she kept the five alive and clothed and in school until the boy was about fifteen and went to work. When I hear of the lone widows of the tenements, who are apt to be very husky, and who work out with no great mental struggle and who have clothes and food given them and who set the children to work as soon as they are able to walk, I feel like getting up in my seat and telling about Helen Bonnington—a plain middle-classer. And she was no exception either.

I seem to have rambled off a bit here but this was only one of many contrasts which I made in these years which seemed to me to be all in favor of my new neighbors. The point is that at the bottom you not only see advantages you didn't see before but you're in a po-

sition to use them. You aren't shackled by conventions; you aren't cramped by caste. The world stands ready to help the under dog but before it will lift a finger it wants to see the dog stretched out on its back with all four legs sticking up in prayer. Of the middle-class dog who fights on and on, even after he's wobbly and can't see, it doesn't seem to take much notice.

However Ruth started in with a few reforms of her own. She made it a point to go down and see young Michele every day and watch that he didn't get any more macaroni and gravy. The youngster himself resented this interference but the parents took it in good part. Then in time she ventured further and suggested that the baby would be better off if the windows were washed to let in the sunshine and the floor scrubbed a bit. Finally she became bold enough to hint that it might be well to wash some of the bed clothing.

The district nurse appreciated the change, if Michele himself didn't and I found that it wasn't long before Miss Colver was making use of this new influence in the house. She made a call on Ruth and discussed her cases with her until in the end she made of her a

sort of first assistant. This was the beginning of a new field of activity for Ruth which finally won for her the name of Little Mother. It was wonderful how quickly these people discovered the sweet qualities in Ruth that had passed all unnoticed in the old life.

It made me very proud.

CHAPTER XI

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

I had found that I was badly handicapped in all intercourse with my Italian fellow workers by the fact that I knew nothing of their language and that they knew but little English. The handicap did not lie so much in the fact that we couldn't make ourselves understood—we could after a rough fashion—as it did in the fact that this made a barrier which kept our two nationalities sharply defined. I was always an American talking to an Italian. The boss was always an American talking to a Dago. This seemed to me a great disadvantage. It ought to be just a foreman to his man or one man to another.

The chance to acquire a new language I thought had passed with my high school days, but down here everyone was learning English and so I resolved to study Italian. I made a bargain with Giuseppe, the young sculptor, who

was now a frequent visitor at our flat, to teach me his language in return for instruction in mine. He agreed though he had long been getting good instruction at the night school. But the lad had found an appreciative friend in Ruth who not only sincerely admired the work he was doing but who admired his enthusiasm and his knowledge of art. I liked him myself for he was dreaming bigger things than I. To watch his thin cheeks grow red and his big brown eyes flash as he talked of some old painting gave me a realization that there was something else to be thought of even down here than mere money success. It was good for me.

The poor fellow was driven almost mad by having to offer for sale some of the casts which his master made him carry. He would have liked to sell only busts of Michael Angelo and Dante and worthy reproductions of the old masters.

"There are so many beautiful things," he used to exclaim excitedly in broken English; "why should they want to make anything that is not beautiful?"

He sputtered time and time again over the pity of gilding the casts. You'd have thought

it was a crime which ought to be punished by hanging.

"Even Dante," he groaned one night, "that wonderful, white sad face of Dante covered all over with gilt!"

"It has to look like gold before an American will buy it," I suggested.

"Yes," he nodded. "They would even gild the Christ."

Ruth said she wanted to learn Italian with me, and so the three of us used to get together every night right after dinner. I bought a grammar at a second hand bookstore but we used to spend most of our time in memorizing the common every day things a man would be likely to use in ordinary conversation. Giuseppe would say, "Ha Ella il mio cappello?"

And I would say,

"Si, Signore, ho il di Lei cappello."

"Ha Ella il di Lei pane?"

"Si, Signore, ho il mio pane."

"Ha Ella il mio zucchero?"

"Si, Signore, ho il di Lei zucchero."

There wasn't much use in going over such simple things in English for Giuseppe and so instead of this Ruth would read aloud something from Tennyson. After explaining to

him just what every new word meant, she would let him read aloud to her the same passage. He soon became very enthusiastic over the text itself and would often stop her with the exclamation,

"Ah, there is a study!"

Then he would tell us just how he would model whatever the picture happened to be that he saw in his mind. It was wonderful how clearly he saw these pictures. He could tell you even down to how the folds of the women's dresses should fall just as though he were actually looking at living people.

After a week or two when we had learned some of the simpler phrases Ruth and I used to practise them as much as possible every day. We felt quite proud when we could ask one another for "quel libro" or "quell' abito" or "il cotello" or "il cucchiaio." I was surprised at how soon we were able to carry on quite a long talk.

This new idea—that even though I was approaching forty I wasn't too old to resume my studies—took root in another direction. As I had become accustomed to the daily physical exercise and no longer returned home exhausted I felt as though I had no right to loaf

through my evenings, much as the privilege of spending them with Ruth meant to me. My muscles had become as hard and tireless as those of a well-trained athlete so that at night I was as alert mentally as in the morning. It made me feel lazy to sit around the house after an hour's lesson in Italian and watch Ruth busy with her sewing and see the boy bending over his books. Still I couldn't think of anything that was practicable until I heard Giuseppe talk one evening about the night school. I had thought this was a sort of grammar school with clay modeling thrown in for amusement.

"No, Signore," he said. "You can learn anything there. And there is another school where you can learn other things."

I went out that very evening and found that the school he attended taught among other subjects, book keeping and stenography—two things which appealed to me strongly. But in talking to the principal he suggested that before I decided I look into the night trade school which was run in connection with a manual training school. I took his advice and there I found so many things I wanted that I didn't know what to choose. I was amazed at the opportunity. A man could learn here about

any trade he cared to take up. Both tools and material were furnished him. And all this was within ten minutes' walk of the house. I could still have my early evenings with Ruth and the boy even on the three nights I would be in school until a quarter past seven, spend two hours at learning my trade, and get back to the house again before ten. I don't see how a man could ask for anything better than this. Even then I wouldn't be away from home as much as I often was in my old life. There were many dreary stretches towards the end of my service with the United Woollen when I didn't get home until midnight. And the only extra pay we salaried men received for that was a brighter hope for the job ahead. This was always dangled before our eyes by Morse as a bait when he wished to drive us harder than usual.

I had my choice of a course in carpentry, bricklaying, sheet metal work, plumbing, electricity, drawing and pattern draughting. The work covered from one to three years and assured a man at the end of this time of a position among the skilled workmen who make in wages as much as many a professional man. Not only this but a man with such training as

this and with ambition could look forward without any great stretch of the imagination to becoming a foreman in his trade and eventually winning independence. All this he could accomplish while earning his daily wages as an apprentice or a common laborer.

The class in masonry seemed to be more in line with my present plans than any of the other subjects. It ought to prove of value, I thought, to a man in the general contracting business and certainly to a man who undertook the contracting of building construction. At any rate it was a trade in which I was told there was a steady demand for good men and at which many men were earning from three to five dollars a day. I must admit that at first I didn't understand how brick-laying could be taught for I thought it merely a matter of practice but a glance at the outline of the course showed me my error. It looked as complicated as many of the university courses. The work included first the laying of a brick to line. A man was given actual practice with bricks and mortar under an expert mason. From this a man was advanced, when he had acquired sufficient skill, to the laying out of the American bond; then the

building of square piers of different sizes: then the building of square and pigeon hole corners, then the laying out of brick footings. The second year included rowlock and bonded segmental arches; blocking, toothing, and corbeling; building and bonding of vaulted walls; polygonal and circular walls, piers and chimneys; fire-places and flues. The third year advanced a man to the nice points of the trade such as the foreign bonds—Flemish, Dutch, Roman and Old English; cutting and turning of arches of all kinds, —straight, cambered, semi-circular, three centred elliptical, and many forms of Gothic and Moorish arches; also brick panels and cornices. Finally it gave practice in the laying out of plans and work from these plans. Whatever time was left was devoted to speed in all these things as far as it was consistent with accurate and careful workmanship.

I enrolled at once and also entered a class in architectural drawing which was given in connection with this.

I came back and told Ruth and though of course she was afraid it might be too hard work for me she admitted that in the end it might save me many months of still harder

work. If it hadn't been for the boy I think she would have liked to follow me even in these studies. Whatever new thing I took up, she wanted to take up too. But as I told her, it was she who was making the whole business possible and that was enough for one woman to do.

The school didn't open for a week and during that time I saw something of Rafferty. He surprised me by coming around to the flat one night—for what I couldn't imagine. I was glad to see him but I suspected that he had some purpose in making such an effort. I introduced him to Ruth and we all sat down in the kitchen and I told him what I was planning to do this winter and asked him why he didn't join me. I was rather surprised that the idea didn't appeal to him but I soon found out that he had another interest which took all his spare time. This interest was nothing else than politics. And Rafferty hadn't been over here long enough yet to qualify as a voter. In spite of this he was already on speaking terms with the state representative from our district, the local alderman, and was an active lieutenant of Sweeney's—the ward boss. At present he was interesting himself in the can-

didacy of this same Sweeney who was the Democratic machine candidate for Congress. Owing to some local row he was in danger of being knifed. Dan had come round to make sure I was registered and to swing me over if possible to the ranks of the faithful.

The names of which he spoke so familiarly meant nothing to me. I had heard a few of them from reading the papers but I hadn't read a paper for three months now and knew nothing at all about the present campaign. As a matter of fact I never voted except for the regular Republican candidate for governor and the regular Republican candidate for president. And I did that much only from habit. My father had been a Republican and I was a Republican after him and I felt that in a general way this party stood for honesty as against Tammanyism. But with councillors, and senators and aldermen, or even with congressmen I never bothered my head. Their election seemed to be all prearranged and I figured that one vote more or less wouldn't make much difference. I don't know as I even thought that much about it; I ignored the whole matter. What was true of me was true largely of the other men in our old neighborhood.

Politics, except perhaps for an abstract discussion of the tariff, was not a vital issue with any of us.

Now here I found an emigrant who couldn't as yet qualify as a citizen knowing all the local politicians by their first names and spending his nights working for a candidate for congress. Evidently my arrival down here had been noted by those keen eyes which look after every single vote as a miser does his pennies. A man had been found who had at least a speaking acquaintance with me, and plans already set on foot to round me up.

I was inclined at first to treat this new development as a joke. But as Rafferty talked on he set me to thinking. I didn't know anything about the merits of the two present candidates but was strongly prejudiced to believe that the Democratic candidate, on general principles, was the worst one. However quite apart from this, wasn't Rafferty to-day a better citizen than I? Even admitting for the sake of argument that Sweeney was a crook, wasn't Rafferty who was trying his humble best to get him elected a better American than I who was willing to sit down passively and allow him to be elected? Rafferty at any rate was

getting into the fight. His motive may have been selfish but I think his interest really sprang first from an instinctive desire to get into the game. Here he had come to a new country where every man had not only the chance to mix with the affairs of the ward, the city, the state, the nation, but also a good chance to make himself a leader in them. Sweeney himself was an example.

For twenty-five years or more Rafferty's countrymen had appreciated this opportunity for power and gone after it. The result everyone knows. Their victory in city politics at least had been so decisive year after year that the native born had practically laid down his arms as I had. And the reason for this perennial victory lay in just this fact that men like Rafferty were busy from the time they landed and men like me were lazily indifferent.

Three months before, a dozen speakers couldn't have made me see this. I had no American spirit back of me then to make me appreciate it. You might better have talked to a sleepy Russian Jew a week off the steamer. He at least would have sensed the sacred power for liberty which the voting privilege bestows.

I began to ask questions of Rafferty about the two men. He didn't know much about the other fellow except that he was "agin honest labor and a tool of the thrusts." But on Sweeney he grew eloquent.

"Sure," he said. "There's a mon after ye own heart, me biy. Faith he's dug in ditches himself an he knows wot a full dinner pail manes."

"What's his business?" I asked.

"A contracthor," he said. "He does big jobs for the city."

He let himself loose on what Sweeney proposed to do for the ward if elected. He would have the government undertake the dredging of the harbor thereby giving hundreds of jobs to the local men. He would do this thing and that—all of which had for their object apparently just that one goal. It was a direct personal appeal to every man toiler. In addition to this, Rafferty let drop a hint or two that Sweeney had jobs in his own business which he filled discreetly from the ranks of the wavering. It wasn't more than a month later, by the way, that Rafferty himself was appointed a foreman in the firm of Sweeney Brothers.

But apart from the merits of the question, the thing that impressed me was Rafferty's earnestness, the delight he took in the contest itself, and his activity. He was very much disappointed when I told him I wasn't even registered in the ward but he made me promise to look after that as soon as the lists were again opened and made an appointment for the next evening to take me round to a rally to meet the boys.

I went and was escorted to the home of the Sweeney Club. It was a good sized hall up a long flight of stairs. Through the heavy blue smoke which filled the room I saw the walls decorated with American flags and the framed crayon portraits of Sweeney and other local politicians. Large duck banners proclaimed in black ink the current catch lines of the campaign. At one end there was a raised platform, the rest of the room was filled with wooden settees. My first impression of it all was anything but favorable. It looked rather tawdry and cheap. The men themselves who filled the room were pretty tough-looking specimens. I noticed a few Italians of the fat class and one or two sharp-faced Jews, but for the most part these men were the cheaper ele-

ment of the second and third generation. They were the loafers—the ward heelers. I certainly felt out of place among them and to me even Rafferty looked out of place. There was a freshness, a bulk about him, that his fellows here didn't have.

As he shoved his big body through the crowd, they greeted him by his first name with an oath or a joke and he beamed back at them all with a broad wave of his hand. It was evident that he was a man of some importance here. He worked a passage for me to the front of the hall and didn't stop until he reached a group of about a dozen men who were all puffing away at cigars. In the midst of them stood a man of about Rafferty's size in frame but fully fifty pounds heavier. He had a quiet, good-natured face. On the whole it was a strong face though a bit heavy. His eyes were everywhere. He was the first to notice Rafferty. He nodded with a familiar,

"Hello, Dan."

Dan seized my arm and dragged me forward:

"I want ye to meet me frind, Mister Carleton," he said.

Sweeney rested his grey eyes on me a sec-

ond, saw that I was a stranger here, and stepped forward instantly with his big hand outstretched. He spoke without a trace of brogue.

"I'm very glad to meet you, Mr. Carleton," he said.

I don't know that I'm easily impressed and I flattered myself that I could recognize a politician when I saw one, but I want to confess that there was something in the way he grasped my hand that instantly gave me a distinctly friendly feeling towards Sweeney. I should have said right then and there that the man wasn't as black as he was painted. He was neither oily nor sleek in his manner. We chatted a minute and I think he was a bit surprised in me. He wanted to know where I lived, where I was working, and how much of a family I had. He put these questions in so frank and fatherly a fashion that they didn't seem so impertinent to me at the time as they did later. Some one called him and as he turned away, he said to Rafferty,

"See me before you go, Dan."

Then he said to me,

"I hope I'll see you down here often, Carleton."

With that Dan took me around and introduced me to Tom, Dick and Harry or rather to Tim, Denny and Larry. This crowd came nearer to the notion I had of ward politicians. They were a noisy, husky-throated lot, but they didn't leave you in doubt for a minute but what every mother's son of them was working for Sweeney as though they were one big family with Daddy Sweeney at the head. You could overhear bits of plots and counter plots on every side. I was offered a dozen cigars in as many minutes and though some of the men rather shied away from me at first a whispered endorsement from Dan was all that was needed to bring them back.

There was something contagious about it and when later the meeting itself opened and Sweeney rose to speak I cheered him as heartily as anyone. By this time a hundred or more other men had come in who looked more outside the inner circle. Sweeney spoke simply and directly. It was a personal appeal he made, based on promises. I listened with interest and though it seemed to me that many of his pledges were extravagant he showed such a good spirit back of them that his speech on a whole produced a favorable effect.

At any rate I came away from the meeting with a stronger personal interest in politics than I had ever felt in my life. Instead of seeming like an abstruse or vague issue it seemed to me pretty concrete and pretty vital. It concerned me and my immediate neighbors. Here was a man who was going to Congress not as a figurehead of his party but to make laws for Rafferty and for me. He was to be my congressman if I chose to help make him such. He knew my name, knew my occupation, knew that I had a wife and one child, knew my address. And I want to say that he didn't forget them either.

As I walked back through the brightly lighted streets which were still as much alive as at high noon, I felt that after all this was my ward and my city. I wasn't a mere dummy, I was a member of a vast corporation. I had been to a rally and had shaken hands with Sweeney.

Ruth's only comment was a disgusted grunt as she smelled the rank tobacco in my clothes. She kept them out on the roof all the next day.

CHAPTER XII

OUR FIRST WINTER

This first winter was filled with just about as much interest as it was possible for three people to crowd into six or seven months. And even then there was so much left over which we wanted to do that we fairly groaned as we saw opportunity after opportunity slip by which we simply didn't have the time to improve.

To begin with the boy, he went at his studies with a zest that placed him among the first ten of his class. Dick wasn't a quick boy at his books and so this stood for sheer hard plugging. To me this made his success all the more noteworthy. Furthermore it wasn't the result of goading either from Ruth or myself. I kept after him about the details of his school life and about the boys he met, but I let him go his own gait in his studies. I wanted to see just how the new point of view would work out in him. The result as I saw it was

that every night after supper he went at his problems not as a mere school boy but man-fashion. He sailed in to learn. He had to. There was no prestige in that school coming from what the fathers did. No one knew what the fathers did. It didn't matter. With half a dozen nationalities in the race the school was too cosmopolitan to admit such local issues. A few boys might chum together feeling they were better than the others, but the school as a whole didn't recognize them. Each boy counted for what he did—what he was.

Of the other nine boys in the first ten, four were of Jewish origin, three were Irish, one was Italian, and the other was American born but of Irish descent. Half of them hoped to go through college on scholarships and the others had equally ambitious plans for business. The Jews were easily the most brilliant students but they didn't attempt anything else. The Italian showed some literary ability and wrote a little for the school paper. The American born Irish boy was made manager of the Freshman football team. The other four were natural athletes—two of them played on the school eleven and the others were just built

for track athletics and basket ball. Dick tried for the eleven but he wasn't heavy enough for one thing and so didn't make anything but a substitute's position with the freshmen. I was just as well satisfied. I didn't mind the preliminary training but I felt I would as soon he added a couple more years to his age before he really played football, even if it was in him to play. My point had been won when he went out and tried.

At the end of the first four months in the school I thought I saw a general improvement in him. He held himself better for one thing —with his head higher and his shoulders well back. This wasn't due to his physical training either. It meant a changed mental attitude. Ruth says she didn't notice any difference and she thinks this is nothing but my imagination. But she's wrong. I was looking for something she couldn't see that the boy lacked before. Dick to her was always all right. Of course I knew myself that the boy couldn't go far wrong whatever his training, but I knew also that his former indifferent attitude was going to make his path just so much harder for him. Dick, when he read over this manuscript, said he thought the

whole business was foolish and that even if I wanted to tell the story of my own life, the least I could do was to leave out him. But his life was more largely my life than he realizes even now. And his case was in many ways a better example of the true emigrant spirit than my own.

He joined the indoor track squad this winter, too, but here again he didn't distinguish himself. He fought his way into the finals at the interscholastic meet but that was all. However this, too, was good training for him. I saw that race myself and I watched his mouth instead of his legs. I liked the way his jaws came together on the last lap though it hurt to see the look in his eyes when he fell so far behind after trying so hard. But he crossed the finish line.

In the meanwhile Ruth was just about the busiest little woman in the city. And yet strangely enough this instead of dragging her down, built her up. She took on weight, her cheeks grew rosier than I had seen them for five years and she seemed altogether happier. I watched her closely because I made up my mind that ginger jar or no ginger jar the moment I saw a trace of heaviness in her eyes,

she would have to quit some of her bargain hunting. I didn't mean to barter her good health for a few hundred dollars even if I had to remain a day laborer the rest of my life.

That possibility didn't seem to me now half so terrifying as did the old bogey of not getting a raise. I suppose for one thing this was because we neither of us felt so keenly the responsibility of the boy. In the old days we had both thought that he was doomed if we didn't save enough to send him through college and give him, at the end of his course, capital enough to start in business for himself. In other words, Dick seemed then utterly dependent upon us. It was as terrible a thought to think of leaving him penniless at twenty-one as leaving him an orphan at five months. The burden of his whole career rested on our shoulders.

But now as I saw him take his place among fellows who were born dependent upon themselves, as I learned about youngsters at the school who at ten earned their own living selling newspapers and even went through college on their earnings, as I watched him grow strong physically and tackle his work aggressively, I realized that even if anything should

happen to either Ruth or myself the boy would be able to stand on his own feet. He had the whole world before him down here. If worst came to worst he could easily support himself daytimes, and at night learn either a trade or a profession. This was not a dream on my part; I saw men who were actually doing it. I was doing it myself for that matter. Personally I felt as easy about Dick's future by the middle of that first winter as though I had established an annuity for him which would assure him all the advantages I had ever hoped he might receive. So did Ruth.

I remember some horrible hours I passed in that little suburban house towards the end of my life there. Ruth would sit huddled up in a chair and try to turn my thoughts to other things but I could only pace the floor when I thought what would happen to her and the boy if anything should happen to me; or what would happen to the boy alone if anything should happen to the both of us. The case of Mrs. Bonnington hung over me like a nightmare and the other possibility was even worse. Why, when Cummings came down with pneumonia and it looked for a while as though he might die, I guess I suffered, by applying his

case to mine, as much as ever he himself did on his sick bed. I used to inquire for his temperature every night as though it were my own. So did every man in the neighborhood.

Sickness was a wicked misfortune to that little crowd. When death did pick one of us, the whole structure of that family came tumbling down like a house of cards. If by the grace of God the man escaped, he was left hopelessly in debt by doctor's bills if in the meanwhile he hadn't lost his job. Sickness meant disaster, swift and terrible whatever its outcome. We ourselves escaped it, to be sure, but I've sweat blood over the mere thought of it.

Now if our thoughts ever took so grim a turn, we could speak quite calmly about it. It was impossible for me ever to think of Ruth as sick. My mind couldn't grasp that. But occasionally when I have come home wet and Ruth has said something about my getting pneumonia if I didn't look out, I've asked myself what this would mean. In the first place I now could secure admission to the best hospitals in the country free of cost. I had only to report my case to the city physician and if I were sick enough to warrant it, he would

notify the hospital and they would send down an ambulance for me. I would be carried to a clean bed in a clean room and would receive such medical attention as before I could have had only as a millionaire. Physicians of national reputation would attend me, medicines would be supplied me, and I'd have a night and day nurse for whom outside I would have had to pay some forty dollars a week. Not only this but if I recovered I would be supplied the most nourishing foods in the market and after that sent out of town to one of the quiet convalescent hospitals if my condition warranted it. I don't suppose a thousand dollars would cover what here would be given me for nothing. And I wouldn't either be considered or treated like a charity patient. This was all my due as a citizen—as a toiler. Of course this would be done also for Dick as well as for Ruth.

I don't mean to say that such thoughts took up much of my time. I'm not morbid and we never did have any sickness—we lived too sanely for that. But just as our new viewpoint on Dick relieved us of a tension which before had sapped our strength, so it was a great relief to have such insurance as this in

the background of our minds. It took all the curse off sickness that it's possible to take off. In three or four such ways as these a load of responsibility was removed from us and we were left free to apply all our energy to the task of upbuilding which we had in hand.

This may account somewhat for the reserve strength which Ruth as well as myself seemed to tap. Then of course the situation as a whole was such as to make any woman with imagination buoyant. Ruth had an active part in making a big rosy dream come true. She was now not merely a passive agent. She wasn't economizing merely to make the salary cover the current expenses. Her task was really the vital one of the whole undertaking; she was accumulating capital. When you stop to think of it she was the brains of the business; I was only the machine. I dug the money out of the ground but that wouldn't have amounted to much if it had all gone for nothing except to keep the machine moving from day to day. The dollar she saved was worth more than a hundred dollars earned and spent again. It was the only dollar which counted. They say a penny saved is a penny earned. To my mind

a penny saved was worth to us at this time every cent of a dollar.

So Ruth was not only an active partner but there was another side to the game that appealed to her.

"The thing I like about our life down here," she said to me one night, "is the chance it gives me to get something of myself into every single detail of the home."

I didn't know what she meant because it seemed to me that was just what she had always done. But she shook her head when I said so.

"No," she said. "Not the way I can now."

"Well, you didn't have a servant and must have done whatever was done," I said.

"I didn't have time to pick out the food for the table," she said. "I had to order it of the grocery man. I didn't have time to make as many of your clothes as I wanted. Why I didn't even have time to plan."

"If anyone had told me that a woman could do any more than you then were doing, I should have laughed at them," I said.

"You and the boy weren't all my own then," she said. "I had to waste a great deal of time on things outside the house. Sometimes it

used to make me feel as though you were just one of the neighbors, Billy."

I began to see what she meant. But she certainly found now just as much time if not more to spare on the women and babies all around us.

"They aren't neighbors," she said. "They are friends."

I suppose she felt like that because what she did for them wasn't just wasted energy like an evening at cards.

But she went back again and again, as though it were a song, to this notion that our new home was all her own.

"You may think me a pig, Billy," she said. "But I like it. I like to pick out all myself, every single potato you and the boy eat; I like to pick out every leaf of lettuce, every apple. It makes me feel as though I was doing something for you."

"Good land—" I said.

But she wouldn't let me finish.

"No, Billy," she said. "You don't understand what all that means to me—how it makes me a part of you and Dick as I never was before. And I like to think that in everything you wear there's a stitch of mine right close

to you. And that when you and the boy lie down at night I'm touching you because I made everything clean for you with my own hands."

It makes my throat grow lumpy even now when I remember the eager, half-ashamed way she looked up into my eyes as she said this. Lord, sometimes she made me feel like a little child and other times she made me feel like a giant. But whichever way she made me feel at the moment, she always left me wishing that I had in me every good thing a man can have so that I might be half way worthy of her. There are times when a fellow knows that as a man he doesn't count for much as compared with any woman. And with such a woman as Ruth—well, God knows I tried to do my best in those days and have tried to do that ever since, but it makes me ache to think how little I've been able to give her of all she deserves.

In her housework Ruth had developed a system that would have made a fortune for any man if applied in the same degree to his business. I learned a lot from her. Instead of going at her tasks in the haphazard fashion of most women or doing things just because her

grandmother and her mother did them a certain way, she used her head. I've already told how she did her washing little by little every day instead of waiting for Monday and then tearing herself all to pieces, and that's a fair example of her method. When she was cooking breakfast and had a good fire, she'd have half her dinner on at the same time. Anything that was just as good warmed up, she'd do then. She'd make her stews and soups while waiting for the biscuits to bake and boil her rice or make her cold puddings while we were eating. When that stove was working in the morning you couldn't find a square inch of it that wasn't working. As a result, she planned never to spend over half an hour on her dinner at night and by the time the breakfast dishes were washed she was through with her cooking until then.

She used her head even in little things; she'd make one dish do the work of three. She never washed this dish until she was through with it for good. And she'd find the time at odd moments during her cooking to wash these dishes as they came along. If she spilled anything on the floor she stopped right then and there and cleaned it up, with the result that

when breakfast was served, the kitchen looked as ship-shape as when she began. When she *was* busy, she was the busiest woman you ever saw. She worked with her head, both hands, and her feet. As a result instead of fiddling around all day, when she was through she was through.

When she got up in the morning she knew exactly what she had to do for the day, just how she was going to do it and just when she was going to do it. And you could bank that the things at night would be done, and be done just as she had planned. She thought ahead. That's a great thing to master in any business.

In my own work, the plan I had outlined for myself I developed day by day. At the end of three months I found that even what little Italian I had then learned was a help to me. The mere fact that I was studying their language placed me on a better footing with my fellows. They seemed to receive it as a compliment and to feel that I was taking a personal interest in them as a race. My desire to practise my few phrases was always a letter of introduction to a newcomer.

I talked with them about everything—where they came from, what made them come,

what they did before they came, how long they worked and what pay they got in Italy, how they saved to get over here, how they secured their jobs, what they hoped to do eventually, where they lived, how large their families were, how much it cost them to live and what they ate. I inquired as to what they liked and what they disliked about their work; what they considered fair and what unfair about the labor and the pay; what they liked and didn't like about the foreman. Often I couldn't get any opinion at all out of them on these subjects; often it wasn't honest and often it wasn't intelligent. But as with my other questioning when I sifted it all down and thought it over, I was surprised at how much information I did get. If I didn't learn facts which could be put into words, I was left with a very definite impression and a very wide general knowledge.

In the meanwhile my note book was always busy. I kept jotting down names and addresses with enough running comment to help me to recall the men individually. I wasn't able to locate one out of ten of these men later but the tenth man was worth all the trouble.

As the winter advanced and the air grew

frosty and the snow and ice came, the work in a good many ways was harder. And yet everything considered I don't know but what I'd rather work outdoors at zero than at eighty-five. Except that my hands got numb and everything was more difficult to handle I didn't mind the cold. There was generally exercise enough to keep the blood moving.

We had a variety of work before spring. After the subway job I shifted to a big house foundation and there met another group of skilled workmen from whom I learned much. The work was easier and the surroundings pleasanter if you can speak of pleasant surroundings about a hole in the ground. The soil was easier to handle and we went to no great depth. Here too I met a new gang of laborers. I missed many familiar faces out of the old crowd and found some interesting new men. Rafferty had gone and I was sorry. I saw more or less of him however during the winter for he dropped around now and then on Sunday evenings. I don't think he ever forgot the incident of the sewer gas.

I enjoyed too every hour in my night school. I found here a very large per cent. of foreigners and they were naturally of the more ambi-

tious type. I found I had a great deal to learn even in the matter of spreading mortar and using a trowel. It was really fascinating work and in the instructor I made an invaluable friend. Through him I was able to arrange my scattered fragments of information into larger groups. Little by little I told him something of my plan and he was very much interested in it. He gave me many valuable suggestions and later proved of substantial help in more ways than one.

CHAPTER XIII

I BECOME A CITIZEN

As I said, there were still many opportunities which I didn't have time to improve. The three of us seemed to have breathed in down here some spirit which left us almost feverish in our desire to learn. Whether it was the opportunity which bred the desire or the desire as expressed by all these newcomers, fresh from the shackles of their old lives, which created the opportunity, I leave to the students of such matters. All I know is that we were offered the best in practical information, such as the trade schools and the night high schools; the best in art, the best in music, the best in the drama. I am speaking always of the newcomer—the emigrant. Sprinkled in with these was the cheaper element of the native-born, whether of foreign or of American descent, who spent their evenings on the street or at the cheap theatres or in the barrooms. This class despised the whole busi-

ness. Incidentally these were the men who haunted the bread line, the Salvation Army barracks, and were the first to join in any public demonstration against the rich. The women, not always so much by their own fault, were the type which keeps the charitable associations busy. I'm not saying that among these there were not often cases of sheer hard luck. Now and then sickness played the devil with a family and more often the cussedness of some one member dragged down a half dozen innocent ones with him, but I do say that when misfortune did come to this particular class they didn't buck up to it as Helen Bonnington did or use such means as were at their disposal to pull out of it. They just caved in. Even in their daily lives, when things were going well with them, they lost in the glitter and glare of the city that spark which my middle-class friends lost by stagnation.

Because there was no poetic romance left in their own lives, they despised it in the lives of others and laughed at it in art. Whatever went back into the past, they looked upon scornfully as "ancient." They lived each day as it came with a pride in being up-to-date.

As a result, they preferred musical comedy of the horse play kind to real music; they preferred cheap melodrama to Shakespere. They lived and breathed the spirit of the yellow journals.

I don't know what sort of an education it is the Italians come over here with, but they were a constant surprise to me in their appreciation of the best in art. And it was genuine—it was simple. I've heard a good many jokes about the foolishness of giving them a diet of Shakespere and Beethoven, of Mæterlinck and Mascagni, but that sort of talk comes either from the outsiders or from the Great White Way crowd. When you've seen Italians not only crowd in to the free productions down here but have seen them put up good money to attend the best theatres; when you've heard them whistle grand opera at their work and save hard earned dollars to spend on it down town; when you've seen them crowd the art museums on free days and spend a half dollar to look at some private exhibition of a fellow countryman's, you begin to think, if you're honest, that the laugh is on you. They made me feel ashamed not only because I was ignorant but because after I became more familiar

with the works of the masters I was slower than they to appreciate them. In many cases I couldn't. I didn't flatter myself either that this was because of my superior frankness or up-to-dateness. I knew well enough that it was because of a lack in me and my ancestors.

Scarcely a week passed when there wasn't something worth seeing or hearing presented to these people. It came either through a settlement house or through the generosity of some interested private patron. However it came, it was always through the medium of a class which until now had been only a name to me. This was the independently well-to-do American class—the Americans who had partly made and partly inherited their fortunes and had not yet come to misuse them. It is a class still active in American life, running however more to the professions than to business. Many of their family names have been familiar in history to succeeding generations since the early settlement of New England. They were intellectual leaders then and they are intellectual leaders now. If I could with propriety I'd like to give here a list of half a dozen of these men and women who came, in time, to revive for me my belief that after all there still

is left in this country the backbone of a worthy old stock. But they don't need any such trivial tribute as I might give them. The thing that struck me at once about them was that they were still finding an outlet for their pioneer instinct not only in their professions and their business, but in the interest they took in the new pioneer. Shoulder to shoulder with the modern Pilgrims they were pushing forward their investigations in medicine, in science, in economics. They were adapting old laws to new conditions; they were developing the new West; they were the new thinkers and the new politicians.

I don't suppose that if I had lived for fifty years under the old conditions I would have met one of them. There was no meeting ground for us, for we had nothing in common. I couldn't possibly interest them and I'm sure I was too busy with my own troubles to take any interest in them even if I had known of their existence.

Even down here I resented at first their presence as an intrusion. Whenever I met them I was inclined to play the cad and there's no bigger cad on the face of the earth than a workingman who is beginning to feel his oats.

But as I watched them and saw how earnest they were and how really valuable their efforts were I was able to distinguish them from still another crowd who flaunted their silly charities in the newspapers. But these other quiet men and women were of different calibre; they were the ones who established pure milk stations, who encouraged the young men of real talent like Giuseppe, and who headed all the real work for good done down here.

They came into my life when I needed them; when perhaps I was swinging too far in my belief that the emigrant was the only force for progress in our nation. I know they checked me in some wild thinking in which I was beginning to indulge.

I find I have been wandering a little. But what we thought, counted for as much towards the goal as what we did and even if the thinking is only that of one man—and an ordinary man at that—why, so for that matter was the whole venture. I want to say again that all I'm trying to do is to put down as well as I can remember and as well as I am able, my own acts and thoughts and nothing but my own. Of course that means Ruth's and Dick's too as far as I understood them, for

they were a part of my own. I don't want what I write to be taken as the report of an investigation but just as the diary of one man's experience.

If I had had the time I could have seen at least two of Shakespere's plays—presented by amateurs, to be sure, but amateurs with talent and enthusiasm and guided by professionals. I could have heard at least a half dozen good readers read from the more modern classics. I could have listened to as many concerts by musicians of good standing. I could have heard lectures on a dozen subjects of vital interest. Then there were entertainments designed confessedly to entertain. In addition to these there were many more lectures in the city itself open free to the public and which I now for the first time learned about. There was one series in particular which was addressed once a week by men of international renown. It was a liberal education in itself. Many of my neighbors attended.

But as for Dick he was too busy with his studies and Ruth was too glad to sit at home and watch him, to go out at night.

What spare time I myself had I began to devote to a new interest. Rafferty had first

roused me to my duty as a citizen in the matter of local politics and through the winter called often enough to keep my interest whetted. But even without him I couldn't have escaped the question. Politics was a live issue down here every day in the year. One campaign was no sooner ended than another was begun. Sweeney was no sooner elected than he began to lay wires for his fellows in the coming city election who in their turn would sustain him in whatever further political ambitions he might have. If the hold the boss had on a ward or a city was a mystery to me at first, it didn't long remain so. The secret of his power lay in the fact that he never let go. He was at work every day in the year and he had an organization with which he could keep in touch through his lieutenants whether he was in Washington or at home. Sweeney's personality was always right there in his ward wherever his body might be.

The Sweeney Club rooms were always open. Night after night you could find his trusted men there. Here the man out of a job came and from here was recommended to one contractor or another or to the "city"; here the man with the sick wife came to have her sent

to some hospital which perhaps for some reason would not ordinarily receive her; here the men in court sent their friends for bail; here came those with bigger plans afoot in the matter of special contracts. If Sweeney couldn't get them what they wanted, he at least sent them away with a feeling of deep obligation to him. Naturally then when election time came around these people obeyed Sweeney's order. It wasn't reasonable to suppose that a campaign speech or two could affect their loyalty.

Of course the rival party followed much the same methods but the man in power had a tremendous advantage. The only danger he needed to fear was a split in his own faction as some young man loomed up with ambitions that moved faster than Sweeney's own for him. Such a man I began to suspect—though it was looking a long way into the future—was Rafferty. That winter he took out his naturalization papers and soon afterwards he began an active campaign for the Common Council. It was partly my interest in him and partly a new sense of duty I felt towards the whole game that made me resolve to have a hand in this. I owed that much to the ward

in which I lived and which was doing so much for me.

In talking with some of the active settlement workers down here, I found them as strongly prejudiced against the party in power as I had been and when I spoke to them of Rafferty I found him damned in their eyes as soon as I mentioned his party.

"The whole system is corrupt from top to bottom," said the head of one settlement house to me.

"Are you doing anything to remedy it?" I asked.

"What *can* you do?" he said. "We are doing the only thing possible—we're trying to get hold of the youngsters and give them a higher sense of civic virtue."

"That's good," I said, "but you don't get hold of one in ten of the coming voters. And you don't get hold of one in a hundred of the coming politicians. Why don't you take hold of a man like Dan who is bound to get power some day and talk a little civic virtue into him."

"You said he was a Democrat and a machine man," said he, as though that settled it.

"I don't see any harm in either fact," I said, "if you get at the good in him. A good Dem-

ocrat is a good citizen and a good machine is a good power," I said.

The man smiled.

"You don't know," he said.

"Do *you* know?" I asked. "Have you been to the rallies and met the men and studied their methods?"

"All you have to do is to read the papers," he answered.

"I don't think so," I said. "To beat an enemy you ought to study him at first hand. You ought to find out the good as well as the bad in him. You ought to find out where he gets his power."

"Graft and patronage," he answered.

"What about the other party?" I said.

"Just as bad."

"Then what are you going to do about it?" I asked.

"Our only hope is education," he said.

"Then," I said, "why not educate the young politicians? Get to know Rafferty—he's young and simple and honest now. Help him to advance honestly and keep him that way."

He shook his head doubtfully but he agreed to have a talk with Dan. In the meanwhile

I had a talk with Dan myself. I told him what my scheme was.

"Dan," I said, "you must decide right at the beginning of your career whether you're going to be just a tool of Sweeney's or whether you're going to stand on your own feet."

"Phot's the mather with Sweeney, now?" he asked.

"In some ways he's all right," I said. "And in other ways he isn't. But anyhow he's your boss and you have to do what he tells you to do just as though he was your landlord back in Ireland and you nothing but a tenant."

"Eh?" he said looking up quick.

I thought I'd strike a sore spot there and I made the most of it. I talked along like this for a half hour and I saw his lips come together.

"He'd knife me," he said finally. "He's sore now 'cause I'm afther wantin' to run for the council this year."

I had heard the rumor.

"Then," I said, "why don't you pull free and make a little machine of your own. Some of the boys will stand by you, won't they?"

"Will they?" he grinned.

With that I took him around to the settlement house. Dan listened good naturedly to a lot of talk he didn't understand but he listened with more interest to a lot of talk about the needs of the district which it was now getting cheated out of, which he did understand. And incidentally the man who at first did all the talking in the end listened to Dan. After the latter had gone, he turned to me and said:

"I like that fellow Rafferty."

That seemed to me the really important thing and right there and then we sat down and worked out the basis of the "Young American Political Club." Our object was to reach the young voter first of all and through him to reach the older ones. To this end we had a "Committee on Boys" and a "Committee on Naturalization." I insisted from the beginning that we must have an organization as perfect as that of any political machine. Until we felt our strength a little however, I suggested it was best to limit our efforts to the districts alone. We took a map of the city and we cut up the districts into blocks with a young man at the head of each block. He was to make a list of all the young voters and keep as closely in touch as possible with

the political gossip of both parties. Over him there was to be a street captain and over him a district captain and finally a president.

All this was the result of slow and careful study. All the workers down here fell in with the plan eagerly and one of them agreed to pay the expenses of a hall any time we wished to use one for campaign purposes. At first our efforts passed unnoticed by either political party. It was thought to be just another fanciful civic dream. We were glad of it. It gave us time to perfect our organization without interference.

This business took up all the time I could spare during the winter. But instead of finding it a drag I found it an inspiration. They insisted upon making me president of the Club and though I would rather have had a younger man at its head I accepted the honor with a feeling of some pride. It was the first public office I had ever held and it gave me a new sense of responsibility and a better sense of citizenship.

In the meanwhile Dan made no open break with Sweeney but it soon became clear that he was not in such good favor as before. Although we had not yet openly endorsed his

candidacy we were doing a good deal of talking for him. I received several visits from Sweeney's lieutenants who tried to find out just what we were about. My answer invariably was "No partisanship but clean politics."

When it came time to register I was forced to register with one of the two parties in order to take any part in the primaries. I registered as a Democrat for the first time in my life. I also attended a primary for the first time in my life. I also felt a new power back of me for the first time in my life. Little by little Dan had come to be an issue. Sweeney did not openly declare himself but it was soon evident that he had come to the primaries prepared to knife Rafferty if it were possible. Back of Dan stood his large personal following; back of me stood the balance of power. Sweeney saw it, gave the nod, and Dan was nominated.

Six weeks later he was elected, too. You'd have thought he had been elected mayor by the noise the small boys made. Rafferty came to me with his big paw outstretched,

"Carleton," he said, "the only thing I've got agin ye is thot ye ain't an Irishmon. Faith, ye'd make a domd foine Irishmon."

"It's up to you now," I said, "to make a damned fine American."

It wasn't more than two months later that Dan came to me to ask my opinion on a request of Sweeney's. It looked a bit off color and I said so.

"You can't do it, Dan," I said.

"It manes throuble," he said.

"Let it come. We're back of you with both feet."

Dan followed my advice and the trouble came. He was fired from his job as foreman under Sweeney.

But you can't keep down as good a foreman as Dan was and he had another job within a week.

A few months later I had another job myself. I was made foreman with my own firm at a wage of two dollars and a half a day. When I went back and announced this to Ruth, she cried a little. Truly our cup seemed full and running over.

CHAPTER XIV

FIFTEEN DOLLARS A WEEK

My first thought when I received my advance in pay was that I could now relieve Ruth of some of her burdens. There was no longer any need of her spending so much time in trotting around the markets and the department stores. Nor was there any need of her doing so much plotting and planning in her endeavor to save a penny. Furthermore I was determined that she should now enjoy some of the little luxuries of life in the way of better things to wear and better things to eat. But that idea was taken out of me in short order.

"No," she said, as soon as she recovered from the good news. "We mustn't spend one cent more than we've been spending."

"But look here," I said; "what's the good of a raise if we don't use it?"

"What's the good of a raise if we spend it?" she asked me. "We'll use it, Billy, but we'll use it wisely. How many times have you told

me that if you had your life to live over again you wouldn't spend one cent over the first salary you received, if it was only three dollars a week, until you had a bank account?"

"I know that," I said. "But when a man has a wife and boy like you and Dick—"

"He doesn't want to turn them into burdens that will hold him down all his life," she broke in. "It isn't fair to the wife and boy," she said.

I couldn't quite follow her reasoning but I didn't have to. When I came home the next Saturday night with fifteen dollars in my pocket instead of nine she calmly took out three for the rent, five for household expenses and put seven in the ginger jar. I suggested that at least we have one celebration and with the boy go to the little French restaurant we used to visit, but she held up her hands in horror.

"Do you think I'd spend two dollars and a half for—why, Billy, you wouldn't!"

"I'd like to spend ten," I said. "I'd like to go there to dinner and buy you a half dozen roses and get the three best seats in the best theater in town," I said.

She came to my side and patted my arm.

"Thank you, Billy," she said. "But honest —it's just as much fun to have you want to do those things as really do them."

I believe she meant it. I wouldn't believe it of anyone else but for a week she talked about that dinner and those flowers and the theater until she had me wondering if we hadn't actually gone. Dick thought we were crazy.

And so, just as usual, after this she'd take her basket and start out two or three mornings a week and walk with me as far as the market. She'd spend an hour here and then if she needed anything more she'd go down town to the big stores and wander around here for another hour. But Saturday nights was her great bargain opportunity. If I couldn't go with her she'd take Dick and the two would plan to get there at about nine o'clock. From this time on she often picked up for a song odd ends of meat and good vegetables which the market men didn't want to carry over to Monday. In fact they *had* to sell out these things as their stock at the beginning of the week had to be fresh. I suppose marketing at this time of day would be a good deal of a hardship for those living in the suburbs but it was a regular lark for her. Most everyone is good

natured on Saturday night if on no other night. The week's work is done and people have enough money from their pay envelopes to feel rich for a few hours anyway. Then there were the lights and the crowd and the shouting so that it was like twenty country fairs rolled into one.

After the exitement of coming home Saturdays with so much money wore off, I began to forget that I *was* earning fifteen instead of nine. If Ruth had spent it on the table I'm sure I'd have forgotten it even more quickly. I was getting all I wanted to eat, was warm and had a good clean bed to sleep in and what more can a man have even if he's earning a hundred a week? I think people are very apt to forget that after all a millionaire can spend only about so much on himself. And after the newness of fresh toys has worn off—like steam yachts and private cars—he is forced to be satisfied with just what I had, no matter how much more money he makes. He has only his five senses and once these are satisfied he's no better off than a man who satisfies these same senses on eight dollars a week. Generally he's worse off because in a year or so he has probably dulled

them all. Rockefeller himself probably never in his life got half the fun out of anything that I did in just crawling into my clean bed at night with every tired muscle purring contentedly and my mind at rest about the next day. I doubt if he knows the joy of waking up in the morning rested and hungry. The only advantage he had over me that I can see is the power he had to help others. In a way I don't believe he found any greater opportunity even for that than Ruth found right here.

For those interested in the details I'm going to give another quotation from Ruth's note book. But to my mind these details aren't the important part of our venture. The thing that counted was the spirit back of them. It isn't the fact that we lived on from six to eight dollars a week or the statistics of how we lived on that which makes my life worth telling about if it *is* worth telling about. In the first place prices vary in different localities and shift from year to year. In fact since we began they have almost doubled. In the second place people have lived and are living to-day on less than we did. I give our figures simply to satisfy the

curious and to show how Ruth planned. But no one could do as she did or do as we did merely by aping her little economies, or accepting the result of them. Either they would find the task impossible or look upon it as a privation and endure it as martyrs. In this mood they wouldn't last a week. I know that people who read this without at least a germ of the pioneer in them will either smile or shrug their shoulders. I've met plenty of this sort. I met them by the dozen down here. As I said, you can find them in every bread line, in every Salvation Army barracks or the Associated Charities will furnish you a list of as many as you want. You'll find them in the suburbs or you'll find them marching in line the next time there is a procession of the unemployed.

But give me true pioneers such as our own forefathers were, such as the young men out West are to-day, such as every steamer lands here by the hundreds from foreign countries every week and I say you can't down that kind, you can't kill them. I don't say that it's right to raise the price of necessities. I don't think it is, though I don't know much about it. But I do say that if you double

the cost of food stuffs and then double it again, though you may cruelly starve out the weaklings, you'll find the pioneers still on their feet, still fighting.

It seems strange to me that men will go to Alaska and contentedly freeze and dig all day in a mine—not of their own, but for wages—and not feel so greatly abused or unhappy; that they will swing an axe all day in a forest and live on baked beans and bread without feeling like martyrs; that they will go to sea and grub on hard tack and salt pork and fish without complaint and then will turn Anarchists on the same fare in the East. It seems strange too that these men keep strong and healthy, and that our ancestors kept strong and healthy on even a still simpler diet. Why, my father fought battles—and the mental strain must have been terrific—and did more actual labor every day in carrying a rifle and marching than I do in a week, and slept out doors under a blanket—all on a diet that the average tramp of to-day would spurn. He did this for four years and if the sanitary conditions had been decent would have returned well and strong as many a man did who didn't run afoul typhoid

fever and malaria. Men who do such things have something in them that the men back East have lost. I call it the romantic spirit or the pioneer spirit and I say that a man who has it won't care whether he's living in Maine or California and that whatever the conditions are he will overcome them. I know that we three would have lived on almost rice alone as the Japanese do before we'd have cried quit. That was because we were tackling this problem not as Easterners but as Westerners; not as poor whites but as emigrants. Men on a ranch stand for worse things than we had and have less of a future to dream about.

So I repeat that to my mind the house details don't count here for any more than they did in the lives of the original New England settlers, or the forty-niners, or those on homesteads or in Alaska to-day. However, I'll put them in and I'll take the month of May as an example—the first month after I was made foreman. It's fairer to give the items for a month. They are as follows:

Oatmeal, .17
Corn meal, .10
About one tenth barrel flour, .65

Potatoes, .35
Rice, .08
Sugar, .40
White beans, .16
Pork, .20
Molasses, .10
Onions, .23
Lard, .50
Apples, .36
Soda, etc., .14
Soap, .20
Cornstarch, .10
Cocoa shells, .05
Eggs, .75
Butter, 1.12
Milk, 4.48
Meats, 1.60
Fish, .60
Oil, .20
Yeast cakes, .06
Macaroni, .09
Crackers, .06
Total $12.75

This makes an average of three dollars and nineteen cents a week. With a fluctuation of perhaps twenty-five cents either way

Ruth maintained this pretty much throughout the year now. It fell off a little in the summer and increased a little in the winter. It's impossible to give any closer estimate than this. Even this month many things were used which were left over from the week preceding and, on the other hand, some things on this list like molasses and sugar and cornstarch went towards reducing the total of the month following.

This left say a dollar and seventy-five cents a week for such small incidentals as are not accounted for here but chiefly for sewing material, bargains in cloth remnants and such things as were needed towards the repair of our clothes as well as for such new clothes as we had to buy from time to time. I think we spent more on shoes than we did clothes but Ruth by patronizing the sample shoe shops always came home with a three or four dollar pair for which she never paid over two dollars and sometimes as low as a dollar and a half. The boy and I bought our shoes at the same reduction at bankrupt sales. We gave our neighbors this tip and saw them save a good many dollars in this way.

On the whole these people were not good

buyers; they never looked ahead but bought only when they were in urgent need and then bought at the cheapest price regardless of quality. They would pay two and two and a half for shoes that wouldn't last them any time at all. Whatever Ruth bought she considered the quality first and the price afterwards. Then, too, she often ran across something she didn't need at the time but which was a good bargain; she would buy this and put it away. She was able to buy many things which were out of season for half what the same things would cost six months later. It was very difficult to make our neighbors see the advantage of this practice and their blindness cost them many a good dollar.

We also had the advantage of our neighbors in knowing how to take good care of our clothes. The average man was careless and slovenly. In a week a new suit would be spotted with grease, wrinkled, and all out of shape. He never thought of pressing it, cleaning it or of putting it away carefully when through wearing it. The women were no better about their own clothes. This was also true of their shoes. They might shine

them once a month but generally they let them go until they dried up and cracked. In this way their new clothes soon became workday clothes, their new shoes, old shoes, and as such they lasted a very few months.

Dick and I might have done a little better than our neighbors even without Ruth to watch us, but we certainly would not have had the training we did have. Shoes had to be cleaned and either oiled or shined before going to bed. If it rained we wore our old pairs whether it was Sunday or not or else we stayed at home. Every time Dick or I put on our good clothes we were as carefully inspected as troops on parade. If a grease spot was found, it was removed then and there. If a button was missing or a bit of fringe showed or a hole the size of a pin head was found we had to wait until the defect was remedied. Every Sunday morning the boy pressed both his suit and mine and every night we had to hang our coats over a chair and fold our trousers. If we were careless about it, the little woman without a word simply got up and did them over again herself.

These may seem like small matters but the result was that we all of us kept looking ship-

shape and our clothes lasted. When we finally did finish with them they weren't good for anything but old rags and even then Ruth used them about her housework. I figured roughly that Ruth kept us well dressed on about half what it cost most of our neighbors and yet we appeared to be twice as well dressed as any of them. Of course we had a good many things to start with when we came down here but our clothing bill didn't go up much even during the last year when our original stock was very nearly exhausted. She accomplished this result about one-half by long-headed buying, and one-half by her carefulness and her skill with the needle.

To go back to the matter of food, I'll copy off a week's bill of fare during this month. Ruth has written it out for me. You'll notice that it doesn't vary very much from the earlier ones.

Sunday.

Breakfast: fried hasty pudding with molasses; doughnuts, cocoa made from cocoa shells.

Dinner: lamb stew with dumplings, boiled potatoes, boiled onions, corn starch pudding.

Monday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, baked potatoes, creamed codfish, biscuits.

Luncheon: for Billy: brown bread sandwiches, cold beans, doughnuts, milk; for Dick and me: boiled rice, cold biscuits, baked apples, milk.

Dinner: warmed over lamb stew, baked apples, cocoa, cold biscuits.

Tuesday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, milk toast, cocoa.

Luncheon: for Billy: cold biscuits, hard-boiled eggs, doughnuts; for Dick and me: warmed over beans, biscuits.

Dinner: hamburg steak, baked potatoes, graham muffins, apple sauce, milk.

Wednesday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, griddle-cakes with molasses, cocoa shells.

Luncheon: for Billy: sandwiches made of biscuits and left over steak, doughnuts; for Dick and me: crackers and milk, hot gingerbread.

Dinner: vegetable hash, hot biscuits, gingerbread, apple sauce, milk.

Thursday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, fried hasty pudding, doughnuts, cocoa shells.

Luncheon: for Billy: hard-boiled eggs, cold biscuits, gingerbread, baked apple; for Dick and me: baked potatoes, apple sauce, cold biscuits, milk.

Dinner: lyonnaise potatoes, hot corn bread, Poor man's pudding, milk.

Friday.

Breakfast: smoked herring, baked potatoes, oatmeal, graham muffins.

Luncheon: for Billy: herring, cold muffins, doughnuts; for Dick and me: German toast, apple sauce.

Dinner: fish hash, biscuits, Indian pudding, milk,

Saturday.

Breakfast: oatmeal, German toast, cocoa shells.

Luncheon: for Billy: cold biscuits, hard-boiled eggs, bowl of rice; for Dick and me: rice and milk, doughnuts, apple sauce.

Dinner: baked beans, new raised bread.

To a man accustomed to a beafsteak breakfast, fried hasty pudding may seem a poor substitute and griddle cakes may seem well enough to taper off with but scarcely stuff for a full meal. All I say is, have those things well made, have enough of them and then try it. If a man has a sound digestion and a good body I'll guarantee that such food will not only satisfy him but furnish him fuel for the hardest kind of physical exercise. I know because I've tried it. And though to some my lunches may sound slight, they averaged more in substance and variety than the lunches of my foreign fellow-workmen. A hunk of bread and a bit of cheese was often all they brought with them.

Dick thrived on it too. The elimination of pastry from his simple luncheons brought back the color to his cheeks and left him hard as nails.

I've read since then many articles on domestic economy and how on a few dollars a week a man can make many fancy dishes which will fool him into the belief that he is getting the same things which before cost him a great many more dollars. Their object appears to

be to give such a variety that the man will not notice a change. Now this seems to me all wrong. What's the use of clinging to the notion that a man lives to eat? Why not get down to bed rock at once and face the fact that a man doesn't need the bill of fare of a modern hotel or any substitute for it? A few simple foods and plenty of them is enough. When a man begins to crave a variety he hasn't placed his emphasis right. He hasn't worked up to the right kind of hunger. Compare the old-time country grocery store with the modern provision house and it may help you to understand why our lean sinewy forefathers have given place to the sallow, fat parodies of to-day. A comparison might also help to explain something of the high cost of living. My grandfather kept such a store and I've seen some of his old account books. About all he had to sell in the way of food was flour, rice, potatoes, sugar and molasses, butter, cheese and eggs. These articles weren't put up in packages and they weren't advertised. They were sold in bulk and all you paid for was the raw material. The catalogue of a modern provision house makes a book. The whole object of the change it seems

to me is to fill the demand for variety. You have to pay for that. But when you trim your ship to run before a gale you must throw overboard just such freight. Once you do, you'll find it will have to blow harder than it does even to-day to sink you. I am constantly surprised at how few of the things we think we need we actually *do* need.

The pioneer of to-day doesn't need any more than the pioneer of a hundred years ago. To me this talk that a return to the customs of our ancestors involves a lowering of the standard of living is all nonsense; it means nothing but a simplifying of the standard of living. If that's a return to barbarism then I'm glad to be a barbarian and I'll say there never were three happier barbarians than Ruth, the boy and myself.

CHAPTER XV

THE GANG

If I'd been making five dollars a day at this time, I wouldn't have moved from the tenement. In the first place as far as physical comfort went I was never better off. We had all the room we needed. During the winter we had used the living room as a kitchen and dining room just as our forefathers did. We economized fuel in this way and Ruth kept the rooms spotless. We had no fires in our bedrooms and did not want any. We all of us slept with our windows wide open. If we had had ten more rooms we wouldn't have known what to do with them. When we had a visitor we received him in the kitchen. Some of our neighbors took boarders and also slept in the kitchen. I don't know as I should want to do that but at the same time many a family lives in a one room hut in the forest after this fashion. By outsiders it's looked upon as

rather romantic. It isn't considered a great hardship by the settlers themselves.

Then we had the advantage of our roof and with summer coming on we looked forward to the garden and the joy of the warm starry nights. We had some wonderful winter pictures, too, from that same roof. It was worth going up there to see the house tops after a heavy snow storm.

If I had wanted to move I could have done only one of two things; either gone back into the suburbs or taken a more expensive flat up town. I certainly had had enough of the former and as for the latter I could see no comparison. If anything this flat business was worse than the suburbs. I would be surrounded by an ordinary group of people who had all the airs of the latter with none of their good points. I'd be hedged in by conventions with which I was now even in less sympathy than before. I wouldn't have exchanged my present freedom of movement and independence of action for even the best suite in the most expensive apartment house in the city. Not for a hundred dollars a week. Advantages? What were they? Would a higher grade of wall paper, a more expen-

sive set of furniture and steam heat compensate me for the loss of the solid comfort I found here by the side of my little iron stove? Was an electric elevator a fair swap for my roof? Were the gilt, the tinsel and the soft carpets worth the privilege I enjoyed here of dressing as I pleased, eating what I pleased, doing what I pleased? Was their apartment-house friendship, however polished, worth the simple genuine fellowship I enjoyed among my present neighbors? What could such a life offer me for my soul's or my body's good that I didn't have here? I couldn't see how in a single respect I could better my present condition except with the complete independence that might come with a fortune and a country estate. Any middle ground, assuming that I could afford it, meant nothing but the undertaking again of all the old burdens I had just shaken off.

Ruth, the boy and myself now knew genuinely more people than we had ever before known in our lives. And most of them were worth knowing and the others worth some endeavor to *make* worth knowing. We were all pulling together down here—some harder than others, to be sure, but all with a distinct

ambition that was dependent for success upon nothing but our own efforts.

I was in touch with more opportunities than I had ever dreamed existed. All three of us were enjoying more advantages than we had ever dreamed would be ours. My Italian was improving from day to day. I could handle mortar easily and naturally and point a joint as well as my instructor. I could build a true square pier of any size from one brick to twenty. I could make a square or pigeon-hole corner or lay out a brick footing. And I was proud of my accomplishment.

But more interesting to me than anything else was the opportunity I now had as a foreman to test the value of the knowledge of my former fellow workmen which I had been slowly acquiring. I was anxious to see if my ideas were pure theory or whether they were practical. They had proven practical at any rate in securing my own advance. This had come about through no such pull as Rafferty's. It was the result of nothing but my intelligent and conscientious work in the ditch and among the men. And this in turn was made possible by the application of the knowledge I picked up and used as I had the

chance. It was only because I had shown my employers that I was more valuable as a foreman than a common laborer that I was not still digging. I had been able to do this because having learned from twenty different men how to handle a crowbar for instance, I had from time to time been able to direct the men with whom I was working as at the start I myself had been directed by Anton'. Anton' was still digging because that was all he knew. I had learned other things. I had learned how to handle Anton'.

I had no idea that my efforts were being watched. I don't know now how I was picked out. Except of course that it must have been because of the work I did.

At any rate I found myself at the head of twenty men—all Italians, all strangers and among them three or four just off the steamer. My first job was on a foundation for an apartment house. Of course my part in it was the very humble one of seeing that the men kept at work digging. The work had all been staked out and the architect's agent was there to give all incidental instructions. He was a young graduate of a technical school and I took the opportunity this of-

fered—for he was a good-natured boy—to use what little I had learned in my night school and study his blue prints. At odd times he explained them to me and aside from what I learned myself from them it helped me to direct the men more intelligently.

But it was on the men themselves that I centred my efforts. As soon as possible I learned them by name. At the noon hour I took my lunch with them and talked with them in their own language. I made a note of where they lived and found as I expected that many were from my ward. Incidentally I dropped a word here and there about the "Young American Political Club," and asked them to come around to some of the meetings. I found out where they came from and wherever I could, I associated them with some of their fellows with whom I had worked. I found out about their families. In brief I made myself know every man of them as intimately as was possible.

I don't suppose for a minute that I could have done this successfully if I hadn't really been genuinely interested in them. If I had gone at it like a professional hand shaker they would have detected the hypocrisy in no time.

Neither did I attempt a chummy attitude nor a fatherly attitude. I made it clearly understood that I was an American first of all and that I was their boss. It was perfectly easy to do this and at the same time treat them like men and like units. I tried to make them feel that instead of being merely a bunch of Dagoes they were Italian workingmen. Your foreign laborer is quick to appreciate such a distinction and quick to respond to it. With the American-born you have to draw a sharper line and hold a steadier rein. I figured out that when you find a member of the second or third generation still digging, you've found a man with something wrong about him.

The next thing I did was to learn what each man could do best. Of course I could make only broad classifications. Still there were men better at lifting than others; men better with the crowbar; men better at shoveling; men naturally industrious who would leaven a group of three or four lazy ones. As well as I could I sorted them out in this way.

In addition to taking this personal interest in them individually, I based my relations

with them collectively on a principle of strict, homely justice. I found there was no quality of such universal appeal as this one of justice. Whether dealing with Italians, Russians, Portuguese, Poles, Irish or Irish-Americans you could always get below their national peculiarities if you reached this common denominator. However browbeaten, however slavish, they had been in their former lives this spark seemed always alive. However cocky or anarchistic they might feel in their new freedom you could pull them up with a sharp turn by an appeal to their sense of justice. And by justice I mean nothing but what ex-president Roosevelt has now made familiar by the phrase "a square deal." Justice in the abstract might not appeal to them but they knew when they were being treated fairly and when they were not. Also they knew when they were treating you fairly and when they were not. I never allowed a man to feel bullied or abused; I never gave a sharp order without an explanation. I never discharged a man without making him feel guilty in his heart no matter how much he protested with his lips. And I never discharged him without making the other men

clearly see his guilt. When a man went, he left no sympathizers behind him.

On the other hand I made them act justly towards their employer and towards me. I taught them that justice must be on both sides. I tried to make them understand that their part was not to see how little work they could do for their money and that mine was not to see how much they could do, but that it was up to both of us to turn out a full fair day's work. They were not a chain gang but workmen selling their labor. Just as they expected the store-keepers to sell them fair measure and full weight, so I expected them to sell a full day and honest effort.

It wasn't always possible to secure a result but when it wasn't I got rid of that man on the first occasion. It was very much easier to handle in this way the freedom-loving foreigners than I looked for; with the American-born it was harder than I expected.

On the whole however I was mighty well pleased. I certainly got a lot of work out of them without in any way pushing them. They didn't sweat for me and I didn't want them to —but they kept steadily at their work from morning until night. Then too, I didn't hes-

itate to do a little work myself now and then. If at any point another man seemed to be needed to help over a difficulty I jumped in. I not only often saved the useless efforts of three or four men in this way but I convinced them that I too had my employers' interests at heart. My object wasn't simply to earn my day's pay, it was to finish the job we were on in the shortest possible time. It makes a big difference whether a man feels he is working by the day or by the job. I tried to make them feel that we were all working by the job.

Without boasting I think I can say that we cut down the contractor's estimate by at least a full day. I know they had to do some hustling to get the pile-drivers to the spot on time.

On the next job I had to begin all over again with a new gang. It seemed a pity that all my work on the other should be wasted but I didn't say anything. For two months I took each time the men I had and did my best with them. I had my reward in finding myself placed at the head of a constantly increasing force. I also found that I was being sent on all the hurry-up work. I learned something every day. Finally when the time seemed ripe I went to the contractor's agent with the

proposition towards which I had all along been working. This was that I should be allowed to hire my own men.

The agent was skeptical at first about the wisdom of entrusting such power as this to a subordinate but I put my case to him squarely. I said in brief that I was sure I could pick a gang of fifty men who would do the work of seventy-five. I told him that for a year now I had been making notes on the best workers and I thought I could secure them. But I would have to do it myself. It would be only through my personal influence with them that they could be got. He raised several objections but I finally said:

"Let me try it anyhow. The men won't cost you any more than the others and if I don't make good it's easy enough to go back to the old way."

It's queer how stubbornly business men cling to routine. They get stuck in a system and hate to change. He finally gave me permission to see the men. I was then to turn them over to the regular paymaster who would engage them. This was all I wanted and with my note book I started out.

It was no easy job for me and for a week I had to cut out my night school and give all my time to it. Many of the men had moved and others had gone into other work but I kept at it night after night trotting from one end of the city to the other until I rounded up about thirty of them. This seemed to me enough to form a core. I could pick up others from time to time as I found them. The men remembered me and when I told them something of my plan they all agreed with a grin to report for work as soon as they were free. And this was how Carleton's gang happened to be formed.

It took me about three months to put all my fifty men into good working order and it wasn't for a year that I had my machine where I wanted it. But it was a success from the start. At the end of a year I learned that even the contractor himself began to speak with some pride of Carleton's gang. And he used it. He used it hard. In fact he made something of a special feature of it. It began to bring him emergency business. Wherever speed was a big essential, he secured the contract through my gang. He used us altogether for

foundation work and his business increased so rapidly that we were never idle. I became proud of my men and my reputation.

But of course this success—this proof that my idea was a good one—only whetted my appetite for the big goal still ahead of me. I was eager for the day when this group of men should really be Carleton's gang. It was hard in a way to see the result of my own thought and work turning out big profits for another when all I needed was a little capital to make it my own. Still I knew I must be patient. There were many things yet that I must learn before I should be competent to undertake contracts for myself. In the meanwhile I could satisfy my ambition by constantly strengthening and perfecting the machine.

Then, too, I found that the gang was bringing me into closer touch with my superiors. One day I was called to the office of the firm and there I met the two men who until now had been nothing to me but two names. For a year I had stared at these names painted in black on white boards and posted about the grounds of every job upon which I had worked. I had never thought of them as human beings so much as some hidden force—like the unseen

dynamo of a power plant. They were both Irish-Americans—strong, prosperous-looking men. Somehow they made me distinctly conscious of my own ancestry. I don't mean that I was over-proud—in a way I don't suppose there was anything to boast of in the Carletons—but as I stood before these men in the position of a minor employee I suppose that unconsciously I looked for something in my past to offset my present humiliating situation. And from a business point of view, it was humiliating. The Carletons had been in this country two hundred years and these men but twenty-five or thirty and yet I was the man who stood while they faced me in their easy chairs before their roll-top desks. It was then that I was glad to remember there hadn't been a war in this country in which a Carleton had not played his part. I held myself a little better for the thought.

They were unaffected and business-like but when they spoke it was plain "Carleton" and when I spoke it was "Mr. Corkery," or "Mr. Galvin." That was right and proper enough.

They had called me in to consult with me on a big job which they were trying to figure down to the very lowest point. They were willing to

get out of it with the smallest possible margin of profit for the advertisement it would give them and in view of future contracts with the same firm which it might bring. The largest item in it was the handling of the dirt. They showed me their blue prints and their rough estimate and then Mr. Corkery said:

"How much can you take off that, Carleton?"

I told him I would need two or three hours to figure it out. He called a clerk.

"Give Carleton a desk," he said.

Then he turned to me:

"Stay here until you've done it," he said.

It took me all the forenoon. I worked carefully because it seemed to me that here was a big chance to prove myself. I worked at those figures as though I had every dollar I ever hoped to have at stake. I didn't trim it as close as I would have done for myself but as it was I took off a fifth—the matter of five thousand dollars. When I came back, Mr. Corkery looked over my figures.

"Sure you can do that?" he asked.

I could see he was surprised.

"Yes, sir," I said.

"I'd hate like hell to get stuck," he said.

"You won't get stuck," I answered.

"It isn't the loss I mind," he said, "but—well there is a firm or two that is waiting to give me the laugh."

"They won't laugh," I said.

He looked at me a moment and then called in a clerk.

"Have those figures put in shape," he said, "and send in this bid."

Corkery secured the contract. I picked one hundred men. The morning we began I held a sort of convention.

"Men," I said, "I've promised to do this in so many days. They say we can't do it. If we don't, here's where they laugh at the gang."

We did it. I never heard from Corkery about it but when we were through I thanked the gang and I found them more truly mine than they had ever been before.

Every Saturday night I brought home my fifteen dollars, and Ruth took out three for the rent, five for household expenses, and put seven in the ginger jar. We had one hundred and thirty dollars in the bank before the raise came, and after this it increased rapidly. There wasn't a week we didn't put aside seven dollars, and sometimes eight. The end of my

first year as an emigrant found me with the following items to my credit: Ruth, the boy and myself in better health than we had ever been; Ruth's big mother-love finding outlet in the neighborhood; the boy alert and ambitious; myself with the beginning of a good technical education, to say nothing of the rudiments of a new language, with a loyal gang of one hundred men and two hundred dollars in cash.

This inventory does not take into account my new friends, my new mental and spiritual outlook upon life, or my enhanced self-respect. Such things cannot be calculated.

That first year was, of course, the important year—the big year. It proved what could be done, and nothing remained now but time in which to do it. It established the evident fact that if a raw, uneducated foreigner can come to this country and succeed, a native-born with experience plus intelligence ought to do the same thing more rapidly. But it had taught me that what the native-born must do is to simplify his standard of living, take advantage of the same opportunities, toil with the same spirit, and free himself from the burdensome bonds of caste. The advantage is all with the pioneer, the adven-

turer, the emigrant. These are the real children of the republic—here in the East, at any rate. Every landing dock is Plymouth Rock to them. They are the real forefathers of the coming century, because they possess all the rugged strength of settlers. They are making their own colonial history.

CHAPTER XVI

DICK FINDS A WAY OUT, TOO

When school closed in June, Dick came to me and said:

"Dad, I don't want to loaf all summer."

"No need of it," I said. "Take another course in the summer school."

"I want to earn some money," he said, "I want to go to work."

If the boy had come to me a year ago with that suggestion I should have felt hurt. I would have thought it a reflection upon my ability to support my family. We salaried men used to expect our children to be dependdent on us until they completed their educations. For a boy to work during his summer vacation was almost as bad form as for the wife to work for money at any time. It had to be explained that the boy was a prodigy with unusual business ability or that he was merely seeking experience. But Dick did not fall into any of these classes. This was what

made his proposal the more remarkable to me. It meant that he was willing to take just a plain every-day plugging job.

And underlying this willingness was the spirit that was resurrecting us all. Instead of acting on the defensive, Dick was now eager to play the aggressive game. I hadn't looked for this spirit to show in him so soon, in his life outside of school. I was mighty well pleased.

"All right," I said, "what do you think you can do?"

"I've talked with some of the fellows," he said, "and the surest thing seems to be selling papers."

I gave a gasp at that. I hadn't yet lost the feeling that a newsboy was a sort of cross between an orphan and a beggar. He was to me purely an object of pity. Of course I'd formed this notion like a good many others from the story books and the daily paper. I connected a newsboy with blind fathers and sick mothers if he had any parents at all.

"I guess you can get something better than that to do," I said.

"What's the matter with selling papers?" he asked.

When I stopped to think of the work in that way—as just the buying and selling of papers —I *couldn't* see anything the matter with it. Why wasn't it like buying and selling anything? You were selling a product in which millions of money was invested, a product which everyone wanted, a product where you gave your customers their money's worth. The only objection I could think of at the moment was that there was so little in it.

"It will keep you on the streets five or six hours a day," I said, "and I don't suppose you can make more than a dollar a week."

"A dollar a week!" he said. "Do you know what one fellow in our class makes right through the year?"

"How much?" I asked.

"He makes between six and eight dollars a week," said Dick.

"That doesn't sound possible," I said.

"He told me he made that. And another fellow he knows about did as well as this even while he was in college. He pretty nearly paid his own way."

"What do you make on a paper?" I asked.

"About half a cent on the one cent papers, and a cent on the two cent papers."

"Then these boys have to sell over two hundred papers a day."

"They have about a hundred regular customers," said Dick, "and they sell another hundred papers besides."

It seemed to me the boys must have exaggerated because eight dollars a week was pretty nearly the pay of an able-bodied man. It didn't seem possible that these youngsters whom I'd pitied all my life could earn such an income. However if they didn't earn half as much, it wasn't a bad proposition for a lad.

I talked the matter over with Ruth and I found she had the same prejudices I had had. She, too, thought selling papers was a branch of begging. I repeated what Dick told me and she shook her head doubtfully.

"It doesn't seem as though I could let the boy do that," she said.

If there was one thing down here the little woman always worried about deep in her heart, it was lest the boy and myself might get coarsened. She thought, I think, without ever exactly saying so to herself that in our ambition to forge ahead we might lose some of the finer standards of life. She was bucking against that tendency all the

time. That's why she made me shave every morning, that's why she made me keep my shoes blacked, that's why she made us both dress up on Sunday whether we went to church or not. She for her part kept herself looking even more trig than when she had the fear that Mrs. Grover might drop in at any time. And every night at dinner she presided with as much form as though she were entertaining a dinner party. I guess she thought we might learn to eat with our knives if she didn't.

"Well," I said, "your word is final. But let's look at this first as a straight business proposition."

So I went over the scheme just as I had to myself.

"These boys aren't beggars," I said. "They are little business men. And as a matter of fact most of them are earning as much as their fathers. The trouble is that they've been given a black eye by well-meaning sympathizers who haven't taken the trouble to find out just what the actual facts are. A group of big-hearted women who see their own chickens safely rounded up at six every night, find the newsboys on the street as they themselves are

on their way to the opera and conclude it's a great hardship and that the lads must be homeless and suffering. Maybe they even find a case or two which justifies this theory. But on the whole they are simply comparing the outside of these boys' lives with the lives of their own sheltered boys. They don't stop to consider that these lads are toughened and that they'd probably be on the street anyway. And they don't figure out how much they earn or what that amount stands for down here."

Ruth listened and then she said:

"But isn't it a pity that the boys *are* toughened, Billy?"

"No," I said, "it would be a pity if they weren't. They wouldn't last a year. We have to have some seasoned fighters in the world."

"But Dick—"

"Dick has found his feet now. The suggestion was his own. Personally I believe in letting him try it."

"All right, Billy," she said.

But she said it in such a sad sort of way that I said:

"If you're going to worry about him, this ends it. But I'd like to see the boy so well

seasoned that you won't have to worry about him no matter where he is, no matter what he's doing."

"You're right," she said, "I want to see him like you. I never worry about you, Billy."

It pleased me to have her say that. I know a lot of men who wouldn't believe their wives loved them unless they fretted about them all the time. I think a good many fellows even make up things just to see the women worry. I remember that Stevens always used to come home either with a sick headache or a tale of how he thought he might lose his job or something of the sort and poor Dolly Stevens would stay awake half the night comforting him. She'd tell Ruth about it the next day. I may have had a touch of that disease myself before I came down here but I know that ever since then I've tried to lift the worrying load off the wife's shoulders. I've done my best to make Ruth feel I'm strong enough to take care of myself. I've wanted her to trust me so that she'd know I act always just as though she was by my side. Of course I've never been able to do away altogether with her fear of sickness and sudden death, but so far as my own conduct is con-

cerned I've tried to make her feel secure in me.

When I stop to think about it, Ruth has really lived three lives. She has lived her own and she has lived it hard. She not only has done her daily tasks as well as she knew how but she has tried to make herself a little better every day. That has been a waste of time because she was just naturally as good as they make them but you couldn't ever make her see that. I don't suppose there's been a day when at night she hasn't thought she might have done something a little better and lain awake to tell me so.

Then Ruth has lived my life and done over again every single thing I've done except the actual physical labor. Why every evening when I came back from work she wanted me to begin with seven-thirty A. M. and tell her everything that happened after that. And when I came back from school at night, she'd wake up out of a sound sleep if she had gone to bed and ask me to tell her just what I'd learned. Though she never held a trowel in her hand I'll bet she could go out to-day and build a true brick wall. And though she has never seen half the men I've met, she knows

them as well as I do myself. Some of them she knows better and has proved to me time and again that she does. I've often told her about some man I'd just met and about whom I was enthusiastic for the moment and she'd say:

"Tell me what he looks like, Billy."

I'd tell her and then she'd ask about his eyes and about his mouth and what kind of a voice he had and whether he smiled when he said so and so and whether he looked me in the eyes at that point and so on. Then she'd say:

"Better be a little careful about him"; or "I guess you can trust him, Billy."

Sometimes she made mistakes but that was because I hadn't reported things to her just right. Generally I'd trust her judgment in the face of my own.

Then Ruth led the boy's life. Every ambition he had was her ambition. Besides that she had a dozen ambitions for him that he didn't know anything about. And she thought and worked and schemed to make every single one of them come true. Every trouble he had was her trouble too. If he worried a half hour over something, she worried an hour. Then again there were a whole lot of other

troubles in connection with him which bothered her and which he didn't know about.

Besides all these things she was busy about dressing us and feeding us and making us comfortable. She was always cleaning our rooms and washing our clothes and mending our socks. Then, too, she looked after the finances and this in itself was enough for one woman to do. Then as though this wasn't plenty she kept light-hearted for our sakes. You'd find her singing about her work whenever you came in and always ready with a smile and a joke. And if she herself had a headache you had to be a doctor and a lawyer rolled in one to find it out.

So I say the least I could do was to make her trust me so thoroughly that she'd have one less burden. And I wanted to bring up Dick in the same way. Dick was a good boy and I'll say that he did his best.

Ruth says that if I don't tear up these last few pages, people will think I'm silly. I'm willing so long as they believe me honest. Of course, in a way, such details are no one's business but if I couldn't give Ruth the credit which is her due in this undertaking, I wouldn't take the trouble to write it all out.

Dick told his school friend what he wanted to do and asked his advice on the best way to go at it. The latter went with him and helped him get his license, took him down to the newspaper offices and showed him where to buy his papers, and introduced him to the other boys. The newsboys hadn't at that time formed a union but there was an agreement among them about the territory each should cover. Some of the boys had worked up a regular trade in certain places and of course it wasn't right for a newcomer to infringe upon this. There was considerable talking and some bargaining and finally Dick was given a stand in the banking district. This was due to Dick's classmate also. The latter realized that a boy of Dick's appearance would do better there than anywhere.

So one morning Dick rose early and I staked him to a dollar and he started off in high spirits. He didn't have any of the false pride about the work that at first I myself had felt. He was on my mind pretty much all that day and I came home curious and a little bit anxious to learn the result. He had been back after the morning editions. Ruth reported he had sold fifty papers and had

returned more eager than ever. She said he wouldn't probably be home until after seven. He wanted to catch the crowds on their way to the station.

I suggested to Ruth that we wait dinner for him and go on up town and watch him. She hesitated at this, fearing the boy wouldn't like it and perhaps not over anxious herself to see him on such a job. But as I said, if the boy wasn't ashamed I didn't think we ought to be. So she put on her things and we started.

We found him by the entrance to one of the big buildings with his papers in a strap thrown over his shoulder. He had one paper in his hand and was offering it, perhaps a bit shyly, to each passer-by with a quiet, "Paper, sir?" We watched him a moment and Ruth kept a tight grip on my arm.

"Well," I said, "what do you think of him?"

"Billy," she said with a little tremble in her voice, "I'm proud of him."

"He'll do," I said.

Then I said:

"Wait here a moment."

I took a nickel from my pocket and hurried towards him as though I were one of the crowd hustling for the train. I stopped in front of

him and he handed me a paper without looking up. He began to make change and it wasn't until he handed me back my three coppers that he saw who I was. Then he grinned.

"Hello, Dad," he said.

Then he asked quickly,

"Where's mother?"

But Ruth couldn't wait any longer and she came hurrying up and placed her hand underneath the papers to see if they were too heavy for him.

Dick earned three dollars that first week and he never fell below this during the summer. Sometimes he went as high as five and when it came time for him to go to school again he had about seventy-five regular customers. He had been kept out of doors between six and seven hours a day. The contact with a new type of boy and even the contact with the brisk business men who were his customers had sharpened up his wits all round. In the ten weeks he saved over forty dollars. I wanted him to put this in the bank but he insisted on buying his own winter clothes with it and on the whole I thought he'd feel better if I let him. Then he had another proposition. He wanted to keep his evening customers through the year.

I thought it was going to be pretty hard for him to do this with his school work but we finally agreed to let him try it for a while anyway. After all I didn't like to think he couldn't do what other boys were doing.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SECOND YEAR

Now as far as proving to us the truth of my theory that an intelligent able-bodied American ought to succeed where millions of ignorant, half-starved emigrants do right along, this first year had already done it. It had also proved, to our own satisfaction at least, that such success does not mean a return to a lower standard of living but only a return to a simpler standard of living. With soap at five cents a cake it isn't poverty that breeds filth, but ignorance and laziness. When an able-bodied man can earn at the very bottom of the ladder a dollar and a half a day and a boy can earn from three to five dollars a week and still go to school, it isn't a lack of money that makes the bread line; it's a lack of horse sense. We found that we could maintain a higher standard of living down here than we were able to maintain in our old life; we could live more sanely, breathe in higher ideals,

and find time to accept more opportunities. The sheer, naked conditions were better for a higher life here than they were in the suburbs.

I'm speaking always of the able-bodied man. A sick man is a sick man whether he's worth a million or hasn't a cent. He's to be pitied. With the public hospitals what they are to-day, you can't say that the sick millionaire has any great advantage over the sick pauper. Money makes a bigger difference of course to the sick man's family but at that you'll find for every widow O'Toole, a widow Bonnington and for every widow Bonnington you'll find the heart-broken widow of some millionaire who doesn't consider her dollars any great consolation in such a crisis.

Then, too, a man in hard luck is a man in hard luck whether he has a bank account or whether he hasn't. I pity them both. If a rich man's money prevents the necessity of his airing his grief in public, it doesn't help him much when he's alone in his castle. It seems to me that each class has its own peculiar misfortunes and that money breeds about as much trouble as it kills. To my mind once a man earns enough to buy himself a little food, put

any sort of a roof over his head, and keep himself warm, he has everything for which money is absolutely essential. This much he can always get at the bottom. And this much is all the ammunition a man needs for as good a fight as it's in him to put up. It gives him a chance for an extra million over his nine dollars a week if he wants it. But the point I learned down here is that the million *is* extra—it isn't essential. Its possession doesn't make a Paradise free from sickness and worry and hard luck, and the lack of it doesn't make a Hell's Kitchen where there is nothing but sickness and trouble and where happiness cannot enter.

As I say, I consider this first year the big year because it taught me these things. In a sense the value of my diary ends here. Once I was able to understand that I had everything and more that the early pioneers had and that all I needed to do to-day was to live as they did and fight as they did, I had all the inspiration a man needs in order to live and in order to *feel* that he's living. In looking back on the suburban life at the end of this first twelve months, it seemed to me that the thing which made it so ghastly was just this lack of inspiration that

comes with the blessed privilege of fighting. That other was a waiting game and no help for it. I was a shadow living in the land of shadows with nothing to hit out at, nothing to feel the sting of my fist against. The fight was going on above me and below me and we in the middle only heard the din of it. It was as though we had climbed half way up a rope leading from a pit to the surface. We had climbed as far as we could and unless they hauled from above we had to stay there. If we let go—poor devils, we thought there was nothing but brimstone below us. So we couldn't do much but hold on and kick—at nothing.

But down here if a man had any kick in him, he had something to kick against. When he struck out with his feet they met something; when he shot a blow from the shoulder he felt an impact. If he didn't like one trade he could learn another. It took no capital. If he didn't like his house, he could move; he wasn't tearing up anything by the roots. If he didn't like his foreman, he could work under another. It didn't mean the sacrifice of any past. If he found a chance to black boots or sell papers, he could use it. His neighbors wouldn't exile

him. He was as free as the winds and what he didn't like he could change. I don't suppose there is any human being on earth so independent as an able-bodied working-man.

The record of the next three years only traces a slow, steady strengthening of my position. Not one of us had any set-back through sickness because I considered our health as so much capital and guarded it as carefully as a banker does his money. I was afraid at first of the city water but I found it was as pure as spring water. It was protected from its very source and was stored in a carefully guarded reservoir. It was frequently analyzed and there wasn't a case of typhoid in the ward which could be traced to the water. The milk was the great danger down here. At the small shops it was often carelessly stored and carelessly handled. From the beginning, I bought our milk up town though I had to pay a cent a quart more for it. Ruth picked out all the fish and meat and of course nothing tainted in this line could be sold to her. We ate few canned goods and then nothing but canned vegetables. Many of our neighbors used canned meats. I don't know whether any sickness resulted from this or not but I know

that they often left the stuff for hours in an opened tin. Many of the tenements swarmed with flies in the summer although it was a small matter to keep them out of four rooms. So if the canned stuff *didn't* get infected it was a wonder.

The sanitary arrangements in the flat were good, though here again many families proceeded to make them bad about as fast as they could. These people didn't seem to mind dirt in any form. It was a perfectly simple and inexpensive matter to keep themselves and their surroundings clean if they cared to take the trouble.

Then the roof contributed largely towards our good health. Ruth spent a great deal of time up there during the day and the boy slept there during the summer.

Our simple food and exercise also helped, while for me nothing could have been better than my daily plunge in the salt water. I kept this up as long as the bath house was open and in the winter took a cold sponge and rub-down every night. So, too, did the boy.

For the rest, we all took sensible precautions against exposure. We dressed warmly and

kept our feet dry. Here again our neighbors were insanely foolish. They never changed their clothes until bed time, didn't keep them clean or fresh at any time, and they lived in a temperature of eighty-five with the air foul from many breaths and tobacco smoke. Even the children had to breathe this. Then both men and women went out from this into the cold air either over-dressed or under-dressed. The result of such foolishness very naturally was tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhoid and about everything else that contributes to a high death rate. Not only this but one person suffering from any of these things infected a whole family.

Such conditions were not due to a lack of money but to a lack of education. The new generation was making some changes however. Often a girl or boy in the public schools would come home and transform the three or four rooms though always under protest from the elders. Clean surroundings and fresh air troubled the old folks.

Ruth, too, was responsible for many changes for the better in the lives of these people. Her very presence in a room was an inspiration for cleanliness. Her clothes were no better than

theirs but she stood out among them like a vestal virgin. She came into their quarters and made the women ashamed that the rooms were not better fitted to receive so pure a being. You would scarcely have recognized Michele's rooms at the end of the first year. The windows were cleaned, the floors scrubbed, and even the bed linen was washed occasionally. The baby gained in weight and Michele when he wanted to smoke either sat outside on the door step or by an open window. But Michele was an exception.

Ruth's efforts were not confined to our own building either. Her influence spread down the street and through the whole district. The district nurse was a frequent visitor and kept her informed of all her cases. Wherever Ruth could do anything she did it. Her first object was always to awaken the women to the value of cleanliness and after that she tried her best to teach them little ways of preparing their food more economically. Few of them knew the value of oatmeal for instance though of course their macaroni and spaghetti was a pretty good substitute. In fact Ruth picked up many new dishes of this sort for herself from among them.

Some families spent as much for beer as for milk. Ruth couldn't change that practice but she did make them more careful where they bought their milk—especially when there was a baby in the house. Then, too, she shared all her secrets of where and how to buy cheaply. Sometimes advantage was taken of these hints, but more often not. They didn't pay much more for many articles than she did but they didn't get as good quality. However as long as the food tasted good and satisfied their hunger you couldn't make them take an extra effort and get stuff because it was more nutritious or more healthful. They couldn't think ahead except in the matter of saving dollars and cents.

These people of course were of the lower class. There was another element of decidedly finer quality. Giuseppe for example was one of these and there were hundreds of others. It was among these that Ruth's influence counted for the most. They not only took advantage of her superior intelligence in conducting their households but they breathed in something of the soul of her. When I saw them send for her in their grief and in their joy, when I heard them ask her advice with al-

most the confidence with which they prayed, when I heard them give her such names as "the angel mother," "the blessed American saint," I felt very proud and very humble. Such things made me glad in another way for the change which had taken her out of the old life where such qualities were lost and brought her down here where they counted for so much. These people stripped of convention live with their hearts very near the surface. They don't try to conceal their emotions and so you are brought very quickly into close touch with them. Ruth herself was a good deal like that and so her influence for a day among them counted for as much as a year with the old crowd.

In the meanwhile I resumed my night school at the end of the summer vacation and was glad to get back to it. I had missed the work and went at it this next winter with increased eagerness to perfect myself in my trade.

During this second year, too, I never relaxed my efforts to keep my gang up to standard and whenever possible to better it by the addition of new men. Every month I thought I increased the respect of the men for me by my fair dealing with them. I don't

mean to say I fully realized the expectations of which I had dreamed. I suppose that at first I dreamed a bit wildly. There was very little sentiment in the relation of the men to me, although there was some. Still I don't want to give the impression that I made of them a gang of blind personal followers such as some religious cranks get together. It was necessary to make them see that it was for their interest to work for me and with me and that I did do. I made them see also that in order to work for me they had to work a little more faithfully than they worked for others. So it was a straight business proposition. What sentiment there was came through the personal interest I took in them outside of their work. It was this which made them loyal instead of merely hard working. It was this which made them my gang instead of Corkery's gang—a thing that counted for a good deal later on.

The personal reputation I had won gave me new opportunities of which I took every advantage this second year. It put me in touch with the responsible heads of departments. Through them I was able to acquire a much broader and more accurate knowledge of the business as a whole. I asked as many ques-

tions here as I had below. I received more intelligent answers and was able to understand them more intelligently. I not only learned prices but where to get authoritative prices. As far as possible I made myself acquainted with the men working for the building constructors and for those working for firms whose specialty was the tearing down of buildings. I used my note-book as usual and entered the names of every man who, in his line, seemed to me especially valuable.

And everywhere, I found that my experiment with the gang was well known. I found also that my tendency for asking questions was even better known. It passed as a joke in a good many cases. But better than this I found that I had established a reputation for sobriety, industry and level-headedness. I can't help smiling how little those things counted for me with the United Woollen or when I sought work after leaving that company. Here they counted for a lot. I realized that when it came time for me to seek credit.

In the meanwhile I didn't neglect the fight for clean politics in my ward.

I resigned from the presidency of the young men's club at the end of a year and we elected

a young lawyer who was taking a great interest in the work down here to fill the vacancy. That was a fine selection. The man was fresh from the law school and was full of ideals which dated back to the *Mayflower*. He hadn't been long enough in the world to have them dimmed and was full of energy. He took hold of the original idea and developed it until the organization included every ward in this section of the city. He held rallies every month and brought down big speakers and kept the sentiment of the youngsters red hot. This had its effect upon the older men and before we knew it we had a machine that looked like a real power in the whole city. Sweeney saw it and so did the bigger bosses of both parties. But the president kept clear of alliances with any of them. He stood pat with what promised to be a balance of power, ready to swing it to the cleanest man of either party who came up for office.

I made several speeches myself though it was hard work for me. I don't run to that sort of thing. I did it however just because I didn't like it and because I felt it was the duty of a citizen to do something now and then he doesn't like for his city

and his country. The old excuse with me had been that politics was a dirty business at best and that it ought to be left to the lawyers and such who had something to gain from it. The only men I ever knew who went into it at all were those who had a talent for it and who liked it. Of course that's dead wrong. A man who won't take the trouble to find out about the men up for office and who won't bother himself to get out and hustle for the best of them isn't a good citizen or a good American. He deserves to be governed by the newcomers and deserves all they hand out to him. And the time to do the work isn't when a man is up for president of the United States, it's when the man is up for the common council. The higher up a politician gets, the less the influence of the single voter counts.

It was in the spring that some of my ideals received a set back. The alderman from our ward died suddenly and Rafferty was naturally hot after the vacancy. He came to see me about it, but before he broached this subject he laid another before me that took away my breath. It was nothing else than that I should go into partnership with him under the firm name of "Carleton and Rafferty." I couldn't

believe it possible that he was in a position to take such a step within a couple of years of digging in the ditch. But when he explained the scheme to me, it was as simple as rolling off a log. A firm of liquor dealers had agreed to back him—form a stock company and give him a third interest to manage it. He had spoken to them of me and said he'd do it if they would make it a half interest and give us each a quarter.

"But good Lord, Dan," I said, "we'd have to swing a lot of business to make it go."

"Never you worry about thot, mon," he said. "I'll fix thot all right if I'm elicted to the boord."

"You mean city contracts?" I said.

"Sure."

I began to see. The liquor house was looking for more licenses and would get their pay out of Dan even if the firm didn't make a cent. But Dan with such capital back of him as well as his aldermanic power was sure to get the contracts. He would leave the actual work to me and my men.

I sat down and for two hours tried to make Dan realize how this crowd wanted to use him. I couldn't. In addition to being blinded by

his overwhelming ambition, he actually couldn't see anything crooked in what they wanted. He couldn't understand why he should let such an opportunity drop for someone else to pick up. He had slipped out of my hands completely. This was where the difference between five or six years in America as against two hundred showed itself. And yet what was the old stock doing to offset such personal ambition and energy as Rafferty stood for?

"No, Dan," I said, "I can't do it. And what's more I won't let you do it if I can help it."

"Phot do yez mane?" he asked.

"That I'm going to fight you tooth and nail," I said.

He turned red. Then he grinned.

"Well," he said, "it'll be a foine fight anyhow."

I went to the president of the club and told him that here was where we had to stop Rafferty. He listened and then he said,

"Well, here's where we do stop him."

We went at the job in whirlwind fashion. I spoke a half dozen times but to save my life I couldn't say what I wanted to say. Every time I stood up I seemed to see Dan's big round

face and I remembered the kindly things he used to do for the old ladies. And I knew that Dan's offer to take me into partnership wasn't prompted altogether by selfish motives. He could have found other men who would have served his purpose better.

In the meanwhile Dan had organized "Social Clubs" in half a dozen sections. For the first few weeks of the campaign I never heard of him except as leading grand marches. But the last week he waded in. There's no use going into details. He beat us. He rolled up a tremendous majority. The president of the club couldn't understand it. He was discouraged.

"I had every boy in the ward out working," he said.

"Yes," I said, "but Dan had every grandmother and every daughter and every granddaughter out working."

Dan came around to the flat one night after the election. He was as happy as a boy over his victory.

"Carleton," he said, again, "it's too domd bad ye ain't an Irishmon."

After he had gone, Ruth said to me:

"I don't think Mr. Rafferty will make a bad alderman at all."

CHAPTER XVIII

MATURING PLANS

I received several offers from other firms and as a result of these my wages were advanced first to three dollars a day and then to three and a half. Still Ruth refused to take things easier by increasing the household expenses. During the third year we lived exactly as we had lived during the first year. In a way it was easier to do this now that we knew there was no actual necessity for it. Of course it was easier, too, now that we had fallen into a familiar routine. The things which had seemed to us like necessities when we came down here now seemed like luxuries. And we none of us had either the craving for luxuries or the time to enjoy them had we wished to spend the money on them. In the matter of clothes we cared for nothing except to be warmly and cleanly dressed. Strip the problem of clothes down to this and it's not a very serious one. To real-

ize that you've only to remember how the average farmer dresses or how the homesteader dresses. It's only when you introduce style and the conventions that the matter becomes complicated. Perhaps it was easier for me to dress as I pleased than for the boy or Ruth but even they got right down to bed rock. The boy wore grey flannel shirts and so at a stroke did away with collars and cuffs. For the rest a simple blue suit, a cap, stockings and shoes were all he needed outside his under clothes which Ruth made for him. Ruth herself dressed in plain gowns that she could do up herself. For the street, she still had the costumes she came down here with. None of us kept any extra clothes for parade.

We carried out the same idea in our food, as I've tried to show; we insisted that it must be wholesome and that there must be enough of it. Those were the only two things that counted. Variety except of the humblest kind, we didn't strive for. I've seen cook books which contain five hundred pages; if Ruth compiled one it wouldn't have twenty. Here again the farmer and the pioneer were our models. If anyone in the country had lived the way we were living, it wouldn't have

seemed worth telling about. I find the fact which amazes people in our experiment was that we should have tried the same standard in the city. Everyone seems to think this was a most dangerous thing to attempt. The men who on a camping trip consider themselves well fed on such food as we had to eat expect to starve to death if placed on the same diet once within sound of the trolley cars. And on the camping trip they do ten times the physical labor and do it month after month in air that whets the appetite. Then they come back and boast how strong they've grown, and begin to eat like hogs again and wonder why they get sick.

We camped out in the city—that's all we did. And we did just what every man in camp does; we stripped down to essentials. We could have lived on pork scraps and potatoes if that had been necessary. We could have worried along on hard tack and jerked beef if we'd been pressed hard enough. Men chase moose, and climb mountains and prospect for gold on such food. Why in Heaven's name can't they shovel dirt on the same diet?

So, too, about amusements. When a man is trying to clear thirty acres of pine stumps,

he doesn't fret at the end of the day because he can't go to the theatre. He doesn't want to go. Bed and his dreams are amusement enough for him. And he isn't called a low-browed savage because he's satisfied with this. He's called a hero. The world at large doesn't say that he has lowered the standard of living; it boasts about him for a true American. Why can't a man lay bricks without the theatre?

As a matter of fact however we could have had even the amusements if we'd wanted them. For those who needed such things in order to preserve a high standard of living they were here. And I don't say they didn't serve a useful purpose. What I do say is that they aren't absolutely necessary; that a high standard of living isn't altogether dependent on sirloin steaks, starched collars and music halls as I've heard a good many people claim.

This third year finished my course in masonry. I came out in June with a trade at which I could earn from three dollars to five dollars a day according to my skill. It was a trade, too, where there was pretty generally steady employment. A good mason is more in demand than a good lawyer. Not only that

but a good mason can find work in any city in this country. Wherever he lands, he's sure of a comfortable living. I was told that out west some men were making as high as ten dollars a day.

I had also qualified in a more modest way as a mechanical draftsman. I could draw my own plans for work and what was more useful still, do my work from the plans of others.

By now I had also become a fairly proficient Italian scholar. I could speak the language fluently and read it fairly well. It wasn't the fault of Giuseppe if my pronunciation was sometimes queer and if very often I used the jargon of the provinces. My object was served as long as I could make myself understood to the men. And I could do that perfectly.

This year I watched Rafferty's progress with something like envy. The firm was "D. Rafferty and Co." Within two months I began to see the name on his dump carts whenever I went to work. Within six months he secured a big contract for repaving a long stretch of street in our ward. I knew our firm had put in a bid on it and knew they must have been in a position to put in a mighty low bid. I didn't wonder so much about how Dan got this

away from us as I did how he got it away from Sweeney. That was explained to me later when I found that Sweeney was in reality back of the liquor dealers. Sweeney owned about half their stores and had taken this method to bring Dan back to the fold, once he found he couldn't check his progress.

During this year Dan bought a new house and married. We went to the wedding and it was a grand affair with half the ward there. Mrs. Rafferty was a nice looking girl, daughter of a well-to-do Irishman in the real estate business. She had received a good education in a convent and was altogether a girl Dan could be proud of. The house was an old-fashioned structure built by one of the old families who had been forced to move by the foreign invasion. Mrs. Rafferty had furnished it somewhat lavishly but comfortably.

As Ruth and I came back that night I said:

"I suppose if it had been 'Carleton and Rafferty' I might have had a house myself by now."

"I guess it's better as it is, Billy," she said, with a smile.

Of course it was better but I began to feel discontented with my present position. I felt

uncomfortable at still being merely a foreman. When we reached the house Ruth and I took the bank book and figured out just what our capital in money was. Including the boy's savings which we could use in an emergency it amounted to fourteen hundred dollars. During the first year we saved one hundred and twenty dollars, which added to the eighty we came down here with, made two hundred dollars. During the second year we saved three hundred and ninety dollars. During the third year we saved six hundred dollars. This made a total of eleven hundred and ninety dollars in the bank. The boy had saved more than two hundred dollars over his clothes in the last two years.

It was Rafferty who helped me turn this over in a real estate deal in which he was interested. I made six hundred dollars by that. Everything Rafferty touched now seemed to turn to money. One reason was that he was thrown in contact with money-makers all of whom were anxious to help him. He received any number of tips from those eager to win his favor. Among the tips were many that were legitimate enough like the one he shared with me but there were also many that were

not quite so above-board. But to Dan all was fair in business and politics. Yet I don't know a man I'd sooner trust upon his honor in a purely personal matter. He wouldn't graft from his friends however much he might from the city. In fact his whole code as far as I could see was based upon this unswerving loyalty to his friends and scrupulous honesty in dealing with them. It was only when honesty became abstract that he couldn't see it. You could put a thousand dollars in gold in his keeping without security and come back twenty years later and find it safe. But he'd scheme a week to frame up a deal to cheat the city out of a hundred dollars. And he'd do it with his head in the air and a grin on his face. I've seen the same thing done by educated men who knew better. I wouldn't trust the latter with a ten cent piece without first consulting a lawyer.

The money I had saved didn't represent all my capital. I had as my chief asset the gang of men I had drilled. Everything else being equal they stood ready to work for me in preference to any other man in the city. In fact their value as a machine depended on me. If I had been discharged and another man put in

my place the gang would have resolved itself again into merely one hundred day laborers. Nor was this my only other asset. I had established myself as a reliable man in the eyes of a large group of business men. This meant credit. Nor must I leave out Dan and his influence. He stood ready to back me not only financially but personally. And he knew me well enough to know this would not involve anything but a business obligation on my part.

With these things in mind then I felt ready to take a radical departure from the routine of my life when the opportunity came. But I made up my mind I would wait for the opportunity. I must have a chance which would not involve too much capital and in which my chief asset would be the gang. Furthermore it must be a chance that I could use without resorting to pull. Not only that but it must be something on which I could prove myself to such good advantage that other business would be sure to follow. I couldn't cut loose with my men and leave them stranded at the end of a single job.

I watched every public proposal and analyzed them all. I found that they very quickly re-

solved themselves into Dan's crowd. I kept my ears wide open for private contracts but by the time I heard of any I was too late. So I waited for perhaps three months. Then I saw in the daily paper what seemed to me my opportunity. It was an open bid for some park construction which was under the guardianship of a commission. It was a grading job and so would require nothing but the simplest equipment. I looked over the ground and figured out the gang's part in it first. Then I went to Rafferty and told him what I wanted in the way of teams. I wanted only the carts and horses—I would put my own men to work with them. I asked him to take my note for the cost.

"I'll take your word, Carleton," he said. "Thot's enough."

But I insisted on the note. He finally agreed and offered to secure for me anything I wanted for the work.

I went back to Ruth and we sat down and figured the matter all over once again. We stripped it down to a figure so low that my chief profit would come on the time I could save with my machine. I allowed for the scantiest profit on dirt and rock though I had

secured a good option on what I needed of this. I was lucky in finding a short haul though I had had my eye on this for some time. Of one thing I was extremely careful—to make my estimate large enough so that I couldn't possibly lose anything but my profit. Even if I wasn't able to carry out my hope of being able to speed up the gang I should be able to pay my bills and come out of the venture even.

Ruth and I worked for a week on it and when I saw the grand total it took away my breath. I wasn't used to dealing in big figures. They frightened me. I've learned since then that it's a good deal easier in some ways to deal in thousands than it is in ones. You have wider margins, for one thing. But I must confess that now I was scared. I was ready to back out. When I turned to Ruth for the final decision, she looked into my eyes a second just as she did when I asked her to marry me and said,

"Go after it, Billy. You can do it."

That night I sent in my estimate endorsed by Dan and a friend of his and for a month I waited. I didn't sleep as well as usual but Ruth didn't seem to be bothered. Then one night when I came home I found Ruth at the

outside door waiting for me. I knew the thing had been decided. She came up to me and put her hand on my shoulder and patted me.

"It's yours, Billy," she said.

My heart stopped beating for a moment and then it went on again beating a dozen ticks to the second.

The next day I closed up my options. I went to Corkery, gave my notice and told him what I was going to do. He was madder than a hornet. I listened to what he had to say and went off without a word in reply. He was so unreasonable that it didn't seem worth it. That noon I rounded up the men and told them frankly that I was going to start in business for myself and needed a hundred men. I told them also that this first job might last only four or five weeks and that while I had nothing definite in mind after that I was in hopes to secure in the meanwhile other contracts. I said this would be largely up to them. I told them that I didn't want a man to come who wasn't willing to take the chance. Of course it was something of a chance because Corkery had been giving them steady employment. Still it wasn't a very big chance because there was always work for such men.

I watched anxiously to see how they would take it. I felt that the truth of my theories were having their hardest test. When they let out a cheer and started towards me in a mass I saw blurry.

I'll never forget the feeling I had when I started out in the morning that first day as an independent contractor; I'll never forget my feeling as I reached the work an hour ahead of my men and waited for them to come straggling up. I seemed closer than ever to my ancestors. I felt as my great-great-grandfather must have felt when he cut loose from the Massachusetts colony and went off down into the unknown Connecticut. I was full enough of confidence but I knew that a month might drive me back again. Deeper than this trivial fear however there was something bigger—something finer. I was a free man in a larger way than I had ever been before. It made me feel an American to the very core of my marrow.

The work was all staked out but before the men began I called them all together. I didn't make a speech; I just said:

"Men—I've estimated that this can be done by an ordinary bunch of men in forty days;

I've banked that you can do it in thirty. If you succeed, it gives me profit enough to take another contract. Do the best you can."

There wasn't a mother's son among them who didn't appreciate my position. There were a good many who knew Ruth and knew her through what she had done for their families, and these understood it even better. The dirt began to fly and it was a pretty sight to watch. I never spoke again to the men. I simply directed their efforts. I spent about half the time with a shovel in my hands myself. There was scarcely a day when Ruth didn't come out to watch the work with an anxious eye but after the first week there was little need for anxiety. I think she would have liked to take a shovel herself. One Saturday Dick came out and actually insisted upon being allowed to do this. The men knew him and liked to see such spirit.

Well, we clipped ten days from my estimate, which left me with all my bills paid and with a handsome profit. Better still I had secured on the strength of Carleton's gang another contract.

The night I deposited my profit in the bank, Ruth quite unconsciously took her pad and pen-

cil and sat down by my side as usual to figure up the household expenses for the week. We had been a bit extravagant that week because she had been away from the house a good deal. The total came to four dollars and sixty-seven cents. When Ruth had finished I took the pad and pencil away from her and put it in my pocket.

"There's no use bothering your head any more over these details," I said.

She looked at me almost sadly.

"No, Billy," she said, with a sigh, "there isn't, is there?"

CHAPTER XIX

ONCE AGAIN A NEW ENGLANDER

During all those years we had never seen or heard of any of our old neighbors. They had hardly ever entered our thoughts except as very occasionally the boy ran across one of his former playmates. Shortly after this, however, business took me out into the old neighborhood and I was curious enough to make a few inquiries. There was no change. My trim little house stood just as it then stood and around it were the other trim little houses. There were a few new houses and a few newcomers, but all the old-timers were still there. I met Grover, who was just recovering from a long sickness. He didn't recognize me at first. I was tanned and had filled out a good deal.

"Why, yes," he said, after I had told my name. "Let me see, you went off to Australia or somewhere, didn't you, Carleton?"

"I emigrated," I answered.

He looked up eagerly.

"I remember now. It seems to have agreed with you."

"You're still with the leather firm?" I inquired.

He almost started at this unexpected question.

"Yes," he answered.

His eyes turned back to his trim little house, then to me as though he feared I was bringing him bad news.

"But I've been laid up for six weeks," he faltered.

I knew what was troubling him. He was wondering whether he would find his job when he got back. Poor devil! If he didn't what would become of his trim little house? Grover was older by five years than I had been when the axe fell.

I talked with him a few minutes. There had been a death or two in the neighborhood and the children had grown up. That was the only change. The sight of Grover made me uncomfortable, so I hurried about my business, eager to get home again.

God pity the poor? Bah! The poor are all right if by poor you mean the tenement dwellers. When you pray again pray God to pity

the middle-class American on a salary. Pray that he may not lose his job; pray that if he does it shall be when he is very young; pray that he may find the route to America. The tenement dwellers are safe enough. Pray—and pray hard—for the dwellers in the trim little houses of the suburbs.

I've had my ups and downs, my profits and losses since I entered business for myself but I've come out at the end of each year well ahead of the game. I never made again as much in so short a time as I made on that first job. One reason is that as soon as I was solidly on my feet I started a profit sharing scheme, dividing with the men what was made on every job over a certain per cent. Many of the original gang have left and gone into business for themselves of one sort and another but each one when he went, picked a good man to take his place and handed down to him the spirit of the gang.

Dick went through college and is now in my office. He's a hustler and is going to make a good business man. But thank God he has a heart in him as well as brains. He hopes to make "Carleton and Son" a big firm some day and he will. If he does, every man who faith-

fully and honestly handles his shovel will be part of the big firm. His idea isn't to make things easy for the men; it's to preserve the spirit they come over with and give them a share of the success due to that spirit.

We didn't move away from our dear, true friends until the other boy came. Then I bought two or three deserted farms outside the city—fifty acres in all. I bought them on time and at a bargain. I'm trying another experiment here. I want to see if the pioneer spirit won't bring even these worn out acres to life. I find that some of my foreign neighbors have made their old farms pay even though the good Americans who left them nearly starved to death. I have some cows and chickens and pigs and am using every square foot of the soil for one purpose or another. We pretty nearly get our living from the farm now.

We entertain a good deal but we don't entertain our new neighbors. There isn't a week summer or winter that I don't have one or more families of Carleton's gang out here for a half holiday. It's the only way I can reconcile myself to having moved away from among them. Ruth keeps very closely in touch with them all and has any number of schemes to help them.

Her pet one just now is for us to raise enough cows so that we can sell fresh milk at cost to those families which have kiddies.

Dan comes out to see us every now and then. He's making ten dollars to my one. He says he's going to be mayor of the city some day. I told him I'd do my best to prevent it. That didn't seem to worry him.

"If ye was an Irishmon, now," he said, "I'd be after sittin' up nights in fear of ye. But ye ain't."

I'm almost done. This has been a hard job for me. And yet it's been a pleasant job. It's always pleasant to talk about Ruth. I found that even by taking away her pad and pencil I didn't accomplish much in the way of making her less busy. Even with three children to look after instead of one she does just as much planning about the housework. And we don't have sirloin steaks even now. We don't want them. Our daily fare doesn't vary much from what it was in the tenement.

Ruth just came in with Billy, Jr., in her arms and read over these last few paragraphs. She says she's glad I'm getting through with this because she doesn't know what I might tell about next. But there's nothing more to tell

about except that to-day as at the beginning Ruth is the biggest thing in my life. I can't wish any better luck for those trying to fight their way out than they may find for a partner half as good a wife as Ruth. I wouldn't be afraid to start all over again to-day with her by my side.

THE END